



THE  
PORTFOLIO

MONOGRAPHS ON ARTISTIC SUBJECTS

EDITED BY P. G. HAMERTON

PUBLISHED MONTHLY



No. 11

November, 1894

Albert Dürer's  
Engravings

by

LIONEL CUST



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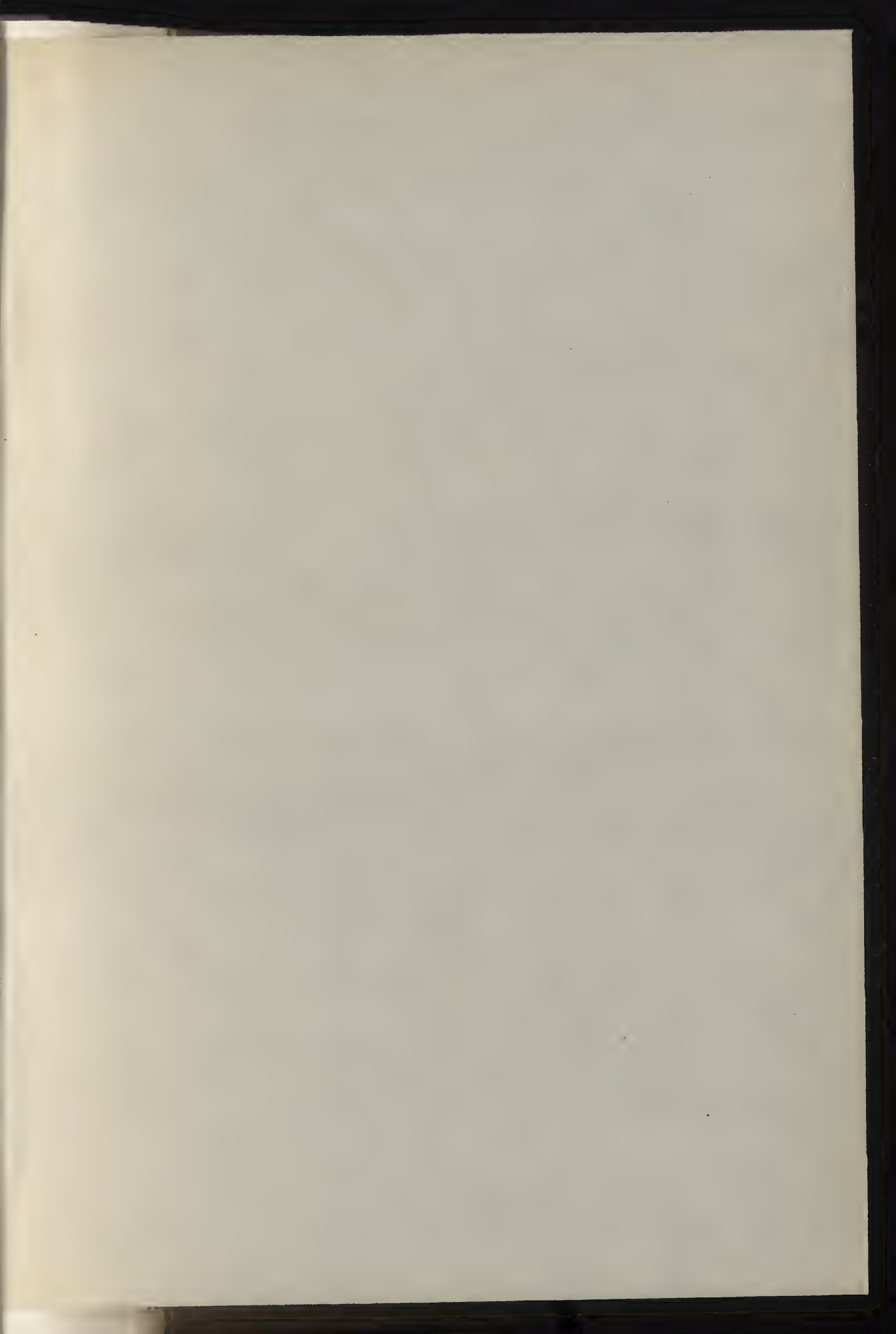


















# THE ENGRAVINGS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

*By*

LIONEL CUST

*Of the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum*



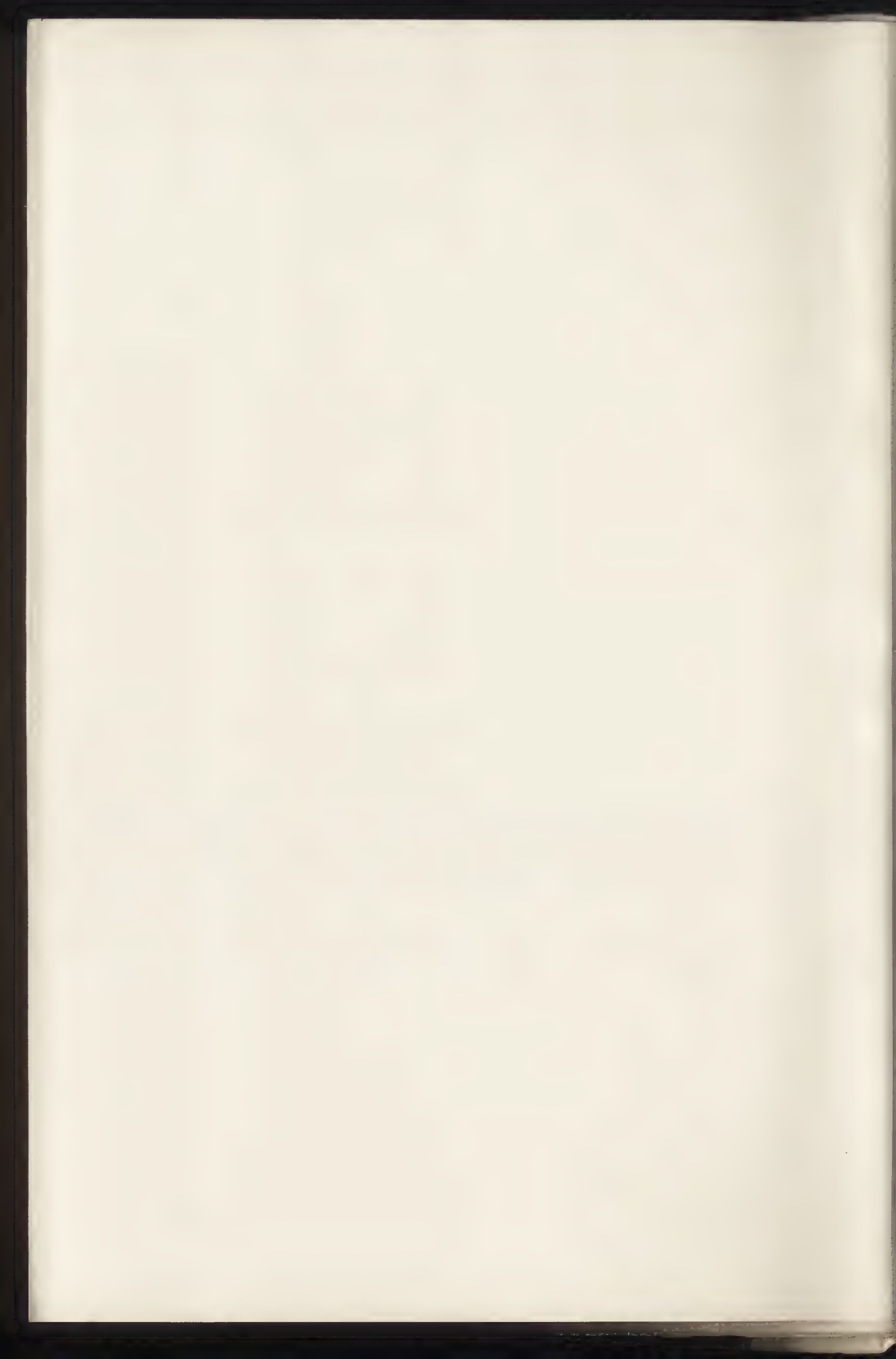
LONDON

SEELEY AND CO. LIMITED, ESSEX STREET, STRAND

NEW YORK, MACMILLAN AND CO.

1894







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List of books to which the writer has been more or less extensively indebted :—

1. "Das Leben und die Werke Albrecht Dürers," von Joseph Heller (Bamberg, 1827).
2. "Albrecht Dürers Kupferstiche, Radirungen, Holzschnitte, und Zeichnungen," vom Oberbaurath B. Hausmann (Hannover, 1861).
3. "Dürers Kupferstiche und Holzschnitte. Ein kritisches Verzeichniss," von R. v. Retberg (München, 1871).
4. "Albert Dürer : his Teachers, his Rivals, and his Followers," by Sidney Colvin, in the *Portfolio*, vol. viii. (1877).
5. "Albert Dürer, his Life and Works," by Moriz Thausing. Translated from the German and edited by Fred. A. Eaton, 2 vols. (John Murray, 1882).
6. "Albert Dürer et ses Dessins," par Charles Ephrussi (Paris, 1882).
7. "The Literary Remains of Albrecht Dürer," by W. M. Conway and Lina Eckenstein (Camb. Univ. Press, 1889).
8. "Albrecht Dürer," von Anton Springer (Berlin, 1892).
9. "Albrecht Dürers Aufenthalt in Basel, 1492-1494," von Dr. Daniel Burckhardt (München, 1892).
10. "Albrecht Dürers Venetianischer Aufenthalt, 1494-1495," von Dr. Gabriel von Terey (Strassburg, 1892).
11. "Catalogue of the Engraved Work of Albrecht Dürer," the prints arranged in the order of their execution, by C. H. Middleton (Cambridge, 1893).
12. "Dürers Schriftlicher Nachlass, etc." herausgegeben von Dr. K. Lange und Dr. F. Fuhse (Halle, 1893).



# THE ENGRAVINGS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

## CHAPTER I

*History of engraving on wood and copper before Dürer—Martin Schongauer—Dürer's birth and parentage—Anthoni Koberger and printing in Nuremberg—Early drawings—Apprenticeship to Wolgemut—"Wanderjahre"—First visit to Venice—Jacopo dei Barbari—Return to Nuremberg.*

To one writing of the life and work of an artist such as Albrecht Dürer, the weighty words of John Ruskin, in his Introduction to the gospel of modern art, *Modern Painters*, recur with particular emphasis. "If it be true," says Ruskin—"and it can scarcely be disputed—that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honour and award what is undue have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds



and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this, the gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature." So writes the art-prophet of the nineteenth century, and his words, leading up as they do to the study and appreciation of the immortal works of Turner, apply as well to the equally immortal creations of Albrecht Dürer.

Albrecht Dürer fills a large space in the history of art. So far as Germany is concerned he is *facile princeps*, unrivalled even in his own age by so great an artist as the younger Hans Holbein, and towering above all his successors, no one of whom can raise a head high enough to look him in the face, with the exception perhaps of Adolf Menzel at the present day. Wherever there are or will be students and lovers of art, there must be a great majority in whom instinct and intellect will be stimulated by the study of the works of Dürer, whether as painter, engraver, philosopher, author, or merely as simple burgher citizen of Nuremberg. That city—*mein liebes Nürnberg*, as Hans Sachs sings in *Die Meistersinger*—is justly proud of the artist to whom it owes so much of its fame, and cherishes among its most treasured relics that low-ceilinged gabled house near the Thiergärtner Thor in which Dürer lived, worked, and died. Although it would seem that it was Dürer's ambition to excel as a painter, it is as an engraver that he has won his fame and taken so sympathetic a grasp of the human heart. It is as an engraver also both on wood and on metal that he has earned that high place in the hierarchy of art which generations of students have allotted to him. It is all the more astonishing to think that copperplate-engraving was hardly older than the century in which Dürer was born, and that wood-engraving, if of greater antiquity, owes its place among the pictorial arts almost entirely to Dürer himself.

It will probably always remain an impossible task to fix an exact date for the invention of engraving on copper or wood, even when limited to the function of giving off an impression with ink or some similar pigment. Two factors must, however, be always taken into consideration—namely, the ink and paper necessary for the making of prints. It was not until the fifteenth century that paper began to be manufactured from linen rags, good, strong, and above all cheap enough to be of use to the printer and the engraver. Parchment, beloved of the scribe, was at all times



an expensive luxury, well adapted for highly finished work, but most unsuitable for rapid and marketable writing or printing. The invention of such paper led to the development of all branches of engraving, and in its turn to that invention which has proved perhaps the most important and fruitful for the whole human race—printing from movable types. Moreover, it was not until the middle of the fifteenth century that an ink was manufactured of a consistency suitable for really satisfactory printing—an ink which it must be remarked, by the way, has never been excelled even at the present day. Given the absence of these two necessary ingredients, the tardiness of the human race in the invention of engraving, or rather of printing in all its branches, can be explained and excused.

The history of wood-engraving is well known : its early use for small rude outline prints of saints or playing-cards, intended solely as a framework for colour, roughly but not always inartistically applied ; then the picture- or block-books, from which sprang the invention of printing with movable types ; and, finally, its adoption for the purpose of decorating or illustrating books. The history of copperplate-engraving is more obscure. The researches of Dr. Max Lehrs, the director of the Royal Cabinet of Prints at Dresden, have proved that it was practised in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and with some skill. It was really developed out of the goldsmith's art, all the earliest copperplate-engravers being probably professional workers in metal. The earliest practitioner of the art was an engraver known as the "Master of the Playing-cards," from a series of interesting cards engraved on copper by him in the early part of the fifteenth century. These cards were popular at the time, because they were copied by the illuminators of manuscripts, which can be dated not later than 1435. Other engravers, whose names are unknown, followed, but the first engraver to invest the art of copperplate-engraving with interest and importance was a native of the Upper Rhine country, whose initials only, E. S., are known, and who worked from about 1450, or perhaps earlier, till 1467. He was probably a goldsmith by profession, but his engravings, which show his gradual progress in the art, are frequently picturesque and decorative, combining great technical skill with much beauty of design and intensity of conception. His immediate successors of importance and originality were the

artist known as "The Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet," from the fact that the bulk of his engravings, executed with the needle or dry point, are preserved at Amsterdam, but who was a native of Swabia or South Germany, and has been identified conjecturally by no less an authority than Dr. Lippmann of Berlin as Hans Holbein the elder; an engraver known by his initials P. W., apparently a native of Cologne; and Martin Schongauer.

Schongauer was a native of Colmar in Alsace, where he was born about the middle of the fifteenth century. Living as he did in the vicinity of the Upper Rhine, and not far from the district in which the master E. S. worked, he must have been acquainted with that artist's engravings. He was both painter and engraver, mingling with the hard dry goldsmith's handling of the copper a tenderness of touch and a depth of feeling which have made his engravings not only highly valued both by his contemporaries and by posterity, but also models which formed and influenced the whole of German art, and established a national character in it, as opposed to the dominating influence of the Flemish school of Rogier van der Weyden and the stern uncompromising art of Cologne. His engravings were circulated far and wide, penetrating even beyond the Alps. Michelangelo was not too great to copy a print by Schongauer, nor Raphael to adopt from one of Schongauer's engravings the principal motive of one of his most famous pictures. *Hübsch Martin*, or Martin the Beautiful, he was dubbed by his friends.

Albrecht Dürer's family did not belong to Nuremberg, nor was he sprung from any patrician or burgher race in its neighbourhood. Fortunately he has left a record of his early life and parentage, compiled in 1524 from some notes left by his father. From these he tells that his grandfather Anthoni Dürer was of a farmer race in a hamlet called Eytas, close to a small town called Gyula, eight miles south of Grosswardein in Hungary, into which town he came as a boy and was apprenticed to a goldsmith. The grandfather married a girl called Elisabeth, by whom he had one daughter and three sons, the eldest of whom was Albrecht, Dürer's father; of the other two the second was called Ladislas, became a saddler, and was the father of Dürer's cousin, Niklas Unger (the Hungarian), who, after working with Dürer's father at Nuremberg, settled as a goldsmith at Cologne; the third son became a scholar, and





*Armorial Bearings of the Dürer Family. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.*

parish priest at Grosswardein. Albrecht Dürer the elder, after wandering through Germany and in the Netherlands, came to Nuremberg in 1455, being about twenty-eight years of age, on St. Eulogius's Day (March 11), "and on that same day Philipp Pirkheimer was celebrating his wedding on the Veste, and a great dance was held under the big lime-tree"; so early did the names of Dürer and Pirkheimer come together. It has been suggested, with some ground, that the name of Dürer (or Thürer, as it was pronounced at Nuremberg) is merely a rendering of the Hungarian word *Ajtó* (Eytas), meaning a door. Albrecht the elder was taken as an apprentice by Hieronymus Holper, who in 1467 gave him his daughter Barbara to wife, the marriage taking place eight days before St. Veit's Day (June 8). Holper had married Kunigunde Oellinger von Weissenburg, which shows him to have been a man of some position. Albrecht and Barbara Dürer had eighteen children, of whom only three lived to grow up—Albrecht, the third child and second son, born in 1471; Andreas, born in 1484; and Hans, born in 1490.

Albrecht Dürer the elder became one of the leading goldsmiths in Nuremberg. His marriage obtained him an entry into the rights of a burgher, and he became Master of the Goldsmiths' Company, and held other public offices of repute. Dürer has left two painted portraits of him—one, dated 1491, at Florence, and another, dated 1497, at Sion House. On the reverse of the former are painted the arms of the Dürer family, being two shields, one bearing gules, an open door azure (for Dürer or Thürer), the other azure, a ram argent for Holper, and surmounted by a Moor's bust with cap and jacket gules, faced with or. Dürer has left a fine woodcut of his own arms, the canting coat being evidently adopted according to the practice prevalent among the leading families of Nuremberg. He also left a written description of his father, in which he says that his father "spent his life in great industry and hard severe work, his only object being to earn with his own hand a living for himself and family; that he was very poor, met with many troubles and reverses, but was esteemed by all who knew him, since he led an honourable Christian life, was patient, gentle and peaceful in his dealings with everybody, and always thankful to God; that he kept but little company, and sought few pleasures for himself, was a man of few words, and feared God; that he paid a great deal



of attention to his children's education, his daily words to them being 'that we should love God and deal truly with our neighbours.' His mother's character is more shadowy : she seems to have been pious and benevolent, and deeply attached to her children, especially to her youngest son Hans, the Benjamin of the family. The two younger sons both became artists : Andreas, a goldsmith at Nuremberg ; and Hans, after working at Nuremberg, and in the service of the Emperor Maximilian, eventually became a painter at Cracow in Poland, not far from the country of his ancestors. Dürer was born on May 21, 1471, in his father's house in the Burgstrasse, a street in the St. Sebald quarter of Nuremberg, leading up to the castle or Veste. In the immediate vicinity were the houses of Bernhard Walther the astronomer, Michel Wolgemut the painter, Hartmann Schedel the man of letters, and Anthoni Koberger the famous printer and publisher, who stood godfather to the young Albrecht. Dürer says that his father took a special delight in him, as he saw that he was anxious to learn, so that he allowed him to go to school and learn to read and write before he apprenticed him to his own trade as a goldsmith. Dürer, however, found that his inclinations were much more towards painting than goldsmithry, and told his father so. His father was disappointed at having wasted so much time on teaching the boy his craft, but gave in to him, and apprenticed him for three years, on St. Andrew's Day in 1486, to the painter Michel Wolgemut, during which time, Dürer says, "God lent me industry, so that I learnt well ; but I had to put up with a great deal of annoyance from my fellow-pupils."

The date of Dürer's birth synchronises with the commencement of a great artistic and industrial movement in Nuremberg.

Wie friedsam treuer Sitten  
Getrost in That und Werk  
Liegt nicht in Deutschlands Mitten  
Mein liebes Nürenberg.—*Die Meistersinger.*

Painting, though practised in Nuremberg for some years previously, did not attain any importance there until the days of the Pleydenwurffs and Wolgemut. Wolgemut married the widow of Hans Pleydenwurff, and with his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwurff was the chief purveyor of

paintings to the citizens of Nuremberg. Their paintings are of no mean merit, which is now beginning to be recognised.

More important, however, to Nuremberg was the great development in the art of printing. Gutenberg's invention was brought from Mayence to Nuremberg about 1470 by Johann Sensenschmidt. Johannes Regiomontanus printed there in 1472 his *Kalendarium Novum*. The great man, though, in the trade was Anthoni Koberger, the first great bookseller in the world, who, besides the numerous printing-presses which he kept at work in Nuremberg, was the chief disseminator of books throughout Europe, with correspondents in every town of importance—Augsburg, Munich, Prague, Vienna, Pesth, Cracow, Lübeck, Paris, Lyons, Basle, Milan, Bologna, Florence, and Venice—a veritable “prince of booksellers,” as one of his contemporaries addresses him. Koberger, though not the actual printer of the first illustrated Bible, which was published by Heinrich Quentel at Cologne in 1480, purchased the blocks, brought them to Nuremberg, and published them in a Bible of his own in 1483. These cuts are evidently designed by a good artist, and probably instigated Koberger to a new venture of book-illustration, when he planned out the *Schatzbehalter* and the *Weltchronik*, with Hartmann Schedel as editor of the latter, and intrusted the drawing of the illustrations to the best artists at hand—the painters Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff. As these books were not published until 1490 and 1492 respectively, after the expiration of Dürer's apprenticeship, he could scarcely have had much share in their production. Supposing that they occupied some years before completion, it is not impossible that he may have had, as an apprentice, some subordinate part in the work. Unfortunately for these books, the merit of the designs was ruined by the inefficiency of the wood-cutters in Koberger's employment, as may be seen by comparing the drawing of *The Creator* in the Print Room at the British Museum with the printed frontispiece of the *Chronicle*. The only painting of importance known to have been produced in Wolgemut's studio during Dürer's apprenticeship is the so-called Peringsdörffer altarpiece, now in the German Museum at Nuremberg, a work of great merit and interest, which must have been executed before the young Dürer's eyes.

There are but few traces of Dürer's work as a boy artist. The most





*Albrecht Dürer at the age of thirteen. From a drawing by himself in the Albertina collection at Vienna.*

interesting is the portrait of himself (in the Albertina collection at Vienna) at the age of thirteen, drawn in silver point from a reflection in a looking-glass, an amazing production for a boy of that age. A somewhat older portrait of himself has just been discovered at Erlangen, a head resting on his hand, drawn with the pen, evidently also from a looking-glass, with a large composition of the Holy Family drawn with the pen on the other side of the same sheet of paper. This drawing



*Portrait of Albrecht Dürer when a boy. From a drawing by himself in the University Library at Erlangen.*

shows a great advance in the art ; though a mere sketch, the drawing of the hand is masterly, and it must be ascribed to a time when the young Dürer had acquired some training, probably during his apprenticeship to Wolgemut. Another drawing (in Berlin), signed and dated 1485, represents the Virgin and Child enthroned, with an angel playing music on either side, and a somewhat similar drawing is in the Louvre at Paris. A fourth drawing in pencil (in the British Museum) of a woman with a



hawk on her wrist is inscribed by another hand: "This also is old. Albrecht Dürer did it for me before he came to the painter, in Wolgemut's house on the upper story in the hinderhouse, in the presence of Conrad Lomayr, deceased." A few other pen-drawings have also been preserved—one of three soldiers (at Berlin), a riding-party (at Bremen), and a courier (in the British Museum). These are all what may be termed engraver's drawings, drawn in outline and shaded with cross-hatchings, as if they had been done by Martin Schongauer. Dürer's father seems not only to have been acquainted with Schongauer's engravings, but to have been in correspondence with Schongauer himself, and the style of these early drawings of Dürer, and many of the designs of Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff, show that Schongauer's engravings must have been regular subjects of study among the pupils in that studio. These drawings show that even at this date Dürer studied the works of other artists, but never merely copied, always working up his notes into original compositions of his own.

Dürer's apprenticeship to Wolgemut terminated towards the close of the year 1489. "When I had completed my service," he says, "my father sent me away, and I remained absent four years, until my father summoned me back." He left Nuremberg after Easter in 1490, and returned after Whitsuntide in 1494. It was the custom in Germany for all young men who intended entering on a trade after the completion of their apprenticeship (*Lehrjahre*) to go away from home for a similar period (*Wanderjahre*) and acquire what knowledge they could of the trade on which they were going to embark, in places and from persons away from their own immediate surroundings. It has been a matter of some dispute as to how Dürer spent his years of wandering. Fortunately, a friend and contemporary of Dürer, Christoph Scheurl, a leading man of letters and humanist in Nuremberg, has left an explicit statement of how part of Dürer's time was occupied. Noticing a statement made by the historian Wimpfeling in 1503, to the effect that Dürer had learnt engraving from Martin Schongauer, Scheurl questioned Dürer himself about the matter. Dürer informed Scheurl that when he was thirteen years old his father had intended to send him eventually to study under Schongauer at Colmar, and had even written to Schongauer on the subject, but that Schongauer died just about the time when Dürer had completed

his three years' apprenticeship to Wolgemut. However, Dürer, in 1492, after travelling through Germany, went all the same to Colmar, and was hospitably received by Schongauer's brothers, the goldsmiths Caspar and Paul, and the painter Ludwig, as he was also at Basle by another brother, the goldsmith Georg Schongauer. Martin Schongauer, however, Dürer never even saw, so that he could never have been his pupil. From this it is evident that Dürer's father, being well acquainted with Schongauer as an engraver, intended his son, after completing his drawing studies with Wolgemut, to go and study in Schongauer's school at Colmar. It is now known that Schongauer died at Breisach on the Rhine early in 1491, but that his school of engraving was carried on by his brother Ludwig. Dürer therefore, although he could not have the advantage of instruction from the great Martin himself, did the next best thing, by coming all the same to study in the Schongauer school at Colmar. It is uncertain what places he had previously visited in Germany, but it is highly probable that his travels were directed by his godfather Koberger, who was in communication with every important town in Germany, and in constant employment of young men like Dürer as travellers in the

<sup>1</sup> This passage is seldom quoted at length. It occurs in Scheurl's letter, "*De Vita et Obitu Reverendi Patris Antonii Kressen, &c.*," printed in Goldast's edition of the *Life and Works of Willibald Pirckheimer*. It runs as follows: "Et in magno precio habuit Albertum Durer Nuremberga, quem ego Germanum Appellem per excellentiam appellare soleo. Testes mihi sunt, ut reliquos taceo, Bononienses pictores, qui illi in faciem me audiente publice principatum picturæ in universo orbe detulerunt, affirmantes jucundius se morituros viso tamdiu desiderato Alberto. Testis liber quem de ratione pingendi post Appellem nostro ævo solus perscripsit, de quo pictores judicant et potentes. Mihi in meo suavissimo Durer non minus grata sunt ingenuina probitas, facundia, comitas, facilitas, humanitas. Itaque unum præterire nequeo. Jacobus Vimphelingius nunquam a me sine honoris præfatione nominandus capite 68 Epitomatis Germanorum tradit Albertum nostrum usum esse præceptore Martino Schön Columbariensi, ceterum Albertum ad me, hoc significantem, scribit, sæpe etiam coram testatur, patrem Albertum, is ex vico Cula prope Veradium civitatem Hungariæ natus erat, destinasse quidem se adolescentulum, tertium decimum annum natum, Martino Schön ob celebrem famam in disciplinam traditurum fuisse, et ad eum eius rei gratia dedisse etiam litteras, qui tamen sub id tempus excesserit undi ipse in Gymnasio utriusque nostrum vicini et municipis Michaelis Wolgemuts triennio profecerit: tandem peragrata Germania, quum anno nonagesimo secundo Colmariam venisset a Caspare et Paulo aurifabris et Ludovico pictore, item etiam Basileæ a Georgio aurifabro, Martini fratribus, susceptus sit, benigne atque humanè tractatus. Ceterum Martini discipulum minime fuisse, immo ne vidisse quidem, attamen videre desiderasse vehementer."



bookselling trade. It is certain that at some time Dürer visited Strasburg<sup>1</sup> and Basle, where two of Koberger's chief correspondents were in business—Grüninger at Strasburg and Amerbach at Basle. Moreover, these two printers were the chief continuers of Koberger's enterprise in books illustrated by the best artists, of whom there was at the time no large choice. Dürer therefore could have got plenty of employment both in designing

## ERRATUM.

In the *Portfolio* for September Gainsborough's portrait of *Lady Mary Carr*, reproduced by kind permission of Mr. Tooth, was wrongly entitled "Lady Ray."

of the later illustrations to the *Enchiridion* and in the drawings and engravings of the so-called "Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet" mentioned above. That so intelligent a writer as Sebastian Brant, who supervised the printing and illustration of his own works, should have perceived the value of Dürer's draughtsmanship is very probable indeed.

Although evidence has been strongly, almost passionately, brought to show the contrary, it seems to be clearly proved that the latter portion of Dürer's *Wanderjahre* was spent in Venice. Venice was one of the chief centres of the printing world, in fact of the whole world's commerce. German merchants from Venice, Augsburg, and the Hanse Towns mustered there in such force that a special building was reserved for their accommodation, the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, adjoining the Rialto, where they were enjoined by the Venetian Government to reside. Many merchants resided there as general

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agents, among whom was Anthoni Kolb, a native of Nuremberg, and one of Koberger's chief friends and correspondents. Dürer, as Koberger's godson, would naturally have a strong recommendation to Kolb, and a warm welcome from the merchants of Nuremberg. Painting in Venice had just commenced that era of progress and increasing glory which was inaugurated by the introduction of the secret of oil-colours by Antonello da Messina, was continued and brought to a higher pitch of excellence by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and reached its culmination in the works of Giorgione and Titian. At the time of Dürer's first visit the Bellinis were the chief power in Venetian painting, though their rule was shared by that great pioneer in art, their brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna, at Padua. It is known that Dürer had intercourse with Giovanni Bellini, but the painter with whom he was brought into most close association was one Jacopo dei Barbari, or de Barbaris, known familiarly to his fellow-countrymen as Jacometto, and to his German friends as Jakob Walch, that being the word always used by Dürer in his letters to signify an Italian. Barbari was about twenty years older than Dürer, and apparently already an acquaintance of Kolb. He had a considerable reputation as a painter of portraits and illuminations, and was noted for the minuteness and delicacy of his painting, though his colouring, at least in his later works executed in Germany, was very cold and thin. He was however certainly one of the leading painters in Venice before the suns of Giorgione and Titian had risen, and a writer in 1529, the "Anonimo" of the Abbate Morelli, does not hesitate to assign to him the exquisite little painting of *St. Jerome in his Study*, recently acquired by the National Gallery, but now accredited with every possible authority to the great Antonello da Messina himself, whose pupil Barbari<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although there is no reason for doubting the ascription of this interesting painting to Antonello da Messina, it is interesting to quote the "Anonimo's" own words, since he wrote as far back as 1529. The picture was then in the house of Antonio Pasqualino at Venice. "El quadretto del S. Jeronimo che nel studio legge, in abito cardinalesco, alcuni credono che el sii stato di mano di Antonello da Messina; ma li più, e più verisimilmente, l'attribuiscono a Giances, ovvero al Memelin, pittor antico ponentino; e cussì mostra quella maniera, benchè el volto è finito alla italiana; sicchè pare de mano de Jacometto. Li edifici sono alla ponentina, el paesetto è naturale, minuto e finito, e si vede oltra una finestra, e oltra la porta del studio e pur fugge: e tutta l'opera, per sottilita, colori, disegno, forza, rilievo, è perfetta. Ivi sono ritratti un pavone, un cotorno e un bacil da barbiero espressamente. Nel scabello vi è finta una letterina



may have been. Barbari was not only a painter, but also an engraver of merit. His engravings stand alone among the works of his contemporaries, and, though clearly influenced both by the technical execution and the antique paganism of Mantegna, have an originality of types quite their own, and a style of engraving which approaches more nearly to the northern school than to Mantegna. The half-open mouths and sentimental pose of his figures, with their languorous limbs and clinging drapery, are in strong contrast to the robust and buxom vitality which one associates with Venetian art. Barbari it was who first introduced Dürer to the proportions and measurements of the human body as a subject for study. Dürer has recorded how, when Barbari first showed him the male and female figure drawn according to measurement, he would rather have had it explained to him than received a new kingdom. Like Keats in his sonnet on Chapman's Homer, Dürer may have said—

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims within his ken.

Barbari however refused to explain the whole thing clearly to Dürer, who wanted to get it printed "for Barbari's honour and for common use." Dürer therefore being young and ignorant, but already a devoted art-student, racked his brains to try and work the matter out, and finally, after reading what Vitruvius had to say upon the matter, began that course of original studies on the subject which formed his most absorbing occupation throughout life.<sup>1</sup>

attaccata aperta, che pare contener el nome del maestro, e nondimeno, se si guarda sottilmente appresso, non contiene lettera alcuna, ma è tutta finta. Altri credono che la figura sii stata rifatta da Jacometto Veneziano." (*Notizia d'opere di disegno*, pubblicata e illustrata da D. Jacopo Morelli. Seconda edizione . . . di G. Frizzoni, Bologna 1884.) The suggestion might be hazarded that the barber's basin in the front of the picture is a canting device on the name Barbari or Barberino. It has been doubted by some critics whether the painter Jacometto and Jacopo dei Barbari are the same person.

<sup>1</sup> Dürer's statement is also seldom quoted at length. It occurs in one of the draught dedications to Pirkheimer of Dürer's book on *Proportion*, and is among the manuscripts in the British Museum. "Idoch so ich keinen find, der do Etwas beschrieben hätt van Menschlicher Mass zu machen, dann einen Mann, Jacobus genennt, van Venedig geboren, ein lieblicher Moler, Der wies mir Mann und Weib, die er aus der Mass gemacht hätt und dass ich auf diese Zeit liebr sehen wollt, was sein Meinung wär gewest dann ein neu Kunigreich, und wenn ichs hätt, so wollt ich ihms zu Ehren in Druck bringen, gemeinen Nutz zu gut. Aber ich was zu derselben Zeit noch jung und hätt nie van solchem Ding gehört. Und die Kunst ward mir fast lieben, und nahm die Ding

Dürer's sojourn in Venice was terminated by a summons from his father to return home. He has left an interesting record of his travels in the portrait of himself painted in 1493, and now in the collection of Herr Eugen Felix at Leipzig. Here we see Dürer as he appeared to the Venetians, already displaying a love of fine clothes, and holding in his hand a sprig of blue eryngium (the *Männertreue* of Germany). This portrait was originally painted on parchment, like a drawing of the *Child Christ* in the Albertina collection at Vienna which bears the same date. Over a copy of this portrait no less a personage than Goethe was once moved to enthusiasm. Such paintings on parchment were much in vogue in Basle at this date, so that it is probable that these two paintings were executed during Dürer's stay in that town. Dürer brought home with him from Venice several careful copies of engravings by Mantegna and the Paduan school, showing how deep an impression that great artist and student of the antique had made upon Dürer's mind with his novelties of perspective and audacious feats of draughtsmanship.

zu Sinn, wie man solche Ding möcht zu Wegen bringen. Dann mir wollt dieser vorgemeldet Jacobus seinen Grund nit klärlich anzeigen, das merket ich wol an ihm. Doch nahm ich mein eigen Ding für mich und las den Fitruflum, der beschreibt ein Wenig van der Gliedmass eines Manns. Also van oder aus den zweien obgenannten Mannen hab ich meinen Anfang genummen, und hab dornoch aus meinen Fürnehmen gesucht van Tag zu Tag."—See Lange and Fuhse's *Dürer's Schriftlicher Nachlass*, Halle, 1893.





*Portrait of Albrecht Dürer in 1493; from the painting in the collection of Herr Eugen Felix at Leipzig.*

## CHAPTER II

*Marriage—Early engravings—Influence of Barbari—Early paintings—Early woodcuts—The Reformation—Pirkheimer—The Apocalypse—Adam and Eve—The Life of Mary.*

THE cause of Dürer's peremptory summons home was soon apparent. "After my return," writes Dürer, "Hans Frey came to terms with my father, and gave me his daughter Agnes, and two hundred gulden with her, and we were married on the Monday before St. Margaret's day (July 7), in 1494."



Dürer was now twenty-three years of age, and, though his early drawings show a wonderful amount of skill for his age, there is no trace of that precocity of productiveness which characterised some of his contemporaries, for instance Lucas van Leyden. Dürer was still more of a student than a practical artist. What he studied he absorbed into his mind, digested so to speak, and drew upon for use at subsequent periods. He was now, however, brought face to face with the struggles and difficulties of life. His father was a poor and industrious man, with a wife and two growing boys still to provide for. Hans Frey, though a man of good position, was a *dilettante* dabbler in various mechanical crafts, and it may be doubted whether Agnes Frey brought to her husband at any time more than her wedding dowry of two hundred gulden. The young couple found a home under Dürer's father's roof, and no doubt were also called upon to contribute to the economy of the Dürer household.

In painting, to succeed in which was the goal of Dürer's ambitions, he had made as yet but little progress. He could have learnt in Venice, but hardly yet had time to practise, the art of oil-painting in the manner of Antonello da Messina, but his early works are executed in the old



"tempera" manner, as in the altarpiece at Dresden. When he took to oil-painting he practised it chiefly on portraits.

It was to engraving that Dürer turned for a livelihood. There are no traces of his having executed or published any engravings on copper before his return to Nuremberg and his marriage in 1494. One is tempted to see in an anonymous engraving with four nude studies for figures of Adam and Eve an early experiment on copper by Albrecht Dürer, so striking is the resemblance of the head in the figure of Adam to that in Dürer's own portrait of 1493. Expert authorities however have shown that the technical execution of the engraving is not only quite different from that of Dürer, but is also in close affinity to one or two other contemporary engravers.

Dismissing this engraving, of which the only impression is in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, there remain several engravings which must have been executed between the summer of 1494 and 1497, the latter date being the first which appears on any plate engraved by Dürer. In his early engravings Dürer remains faithful to the method of the Schongauer school, the firm, rather hard, and dry goldsmith's touch and line. The freedom and almost violence of Mantegna's parallel strokes of shading seem to have been alien to the more reserved and concentrating temperament of Dürer. Although a practised and accurate draughtsman, Dürer shows in his earliest prints an inexperience in the actual engraving which can only be accounted for by the supposition that they were literally his first attempts at copperplate-engraving. Perhaps the earliest in date is the unsigned print of *Death as a Ravisher*, which is entirely in Dürer's manner, though some have declined to admit it as his work. In this, one of the manifold representations of the omnipresence and omnipotence of Death, which had so powerful a hold on the popular imagination at this date, the figure of Death is Dürer's own conception, not a gibbering skeleton as in Holbein's work, but the ragged corpse-like wild man of the woods, whom we meet again in *The Four Riders* of the Apocalypse, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, and *The Arms of Death*. Next come three engravings, which bear Dürer's monogram in its earliest forms—*The Love-Bargain*, a familiar study of sensuality and avarice, and *The Six Soldiers*, signed , and *The Holy Family with the Locust*, signed . In the last, which may possibly be the earliest of all, there is an

attempt to cope with difficulties of grouping and perspective which has not been wholly successful. The unsuccessful foreshortening of the figure of Joseph in this last engraving lends some colour to the views of those who would see in the engravings of *The Great Courier* and *The Conversion of St. Paul*<sup>1</sup> early and unsuccessful attempts of Dürer as an engraver. With these four early engravings may be grouped *The Promenade*, another Death subject, in which a handsome pair of lovers walk unconscious of the vicinity and menaces of the common enemy. These five engravings, with their landscape backgrounds, show a distinct attempt to produce a picturesque effect on the copper, an advance already on the Schongauer school, where the skill of the engraver was chiefly exercised in the simple representation of the subject.

Next came a group of small engravings, treated more delicately and in the Schongauer manner—that is to say, in simple line without the introduction of a landscape background, and in general handling rather suggestive of the work of Jacopo dei Barbari: these are *The Peasant and his Wife*, *The Three Peasants*, *The Cook and the Housekeeper*, *The Oriental Family*, and *The Little Fortune*. The last is probably, if the *Adam and Eve* studies be set aside, Dürer's first engraving of the nude. It is noteworthy that in three of these early engravings—*Death as a Ravisher*, *The Holy Family with the Locust*, and *The Little Fortune*—a plant of eryngium occurs similar to that held in Dürer's hand in his portrait of 1493. Two small engravings with landscape backgrounds may be classed with these early prints—*The Lady on Horseback with a Lanzknecht* and *The Little Courier*, and with these *The Monstrous Pig*, important to those to whom the fixing of dates is the chief object, since this abortion is known to have actually been born in 1496.

Perhaps a little later come three larger and more ambitious compositions, more genuinely pictures on copper than those mentioned before—*The Penitence of St. John Chrysostom* (sometimes known erroneously as *St. Geneviève*), *St. Jerome in Penitence*, and *The Prodigal Son*. The last is a well-known and popular engraving, for which a preliminary drawing exists in the British Museum. Both drawing and engraving show the same fault in the drawing of the Prodigal's limbs, and testify to the fidelity with which Dürer transferred his carefully prepared drawings on to the

<sup>1</sup> The only known impressions of these are in the Print Room at Dresden.





*The Promenade. From an engraving by A. Dürer.*



copper. Here Dürer displays that mingling of pathos and humour which is so stimulating to human sympathy. The delightful and yet wholly unobtrusive humour of the pigs is an excellent foil to the haggard and heartrending expression of the poor prodigal.



*The Prodigal Son. From a drawing by A. Dürer, in the Print Room, British Museum.*

In the *St. Jerome* a new phase commences of Dürer's career as an engraver. No student of the engravings by Jacopo dei Barbari can fail to be struck by the similarity between the figure of St. Jerome and some of those in Barbari's engravings. It appears to be certain that during the



last few years of the fifteenth century Barbari visited Nuremberg and resided there some time. Many of his engravings are printed on the same paper which was used by Dürer, though this does not necessarily prove that they were printed in Nuremberg, since the paper could easily have been obtained in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice. But from this time for a period Dürer's engravings show distinct traces of the influence of Barbari, and the presence of Barbari at Nuremberg would make the personal association of the two artists for this period very probable. Barbari, as the older man, naturally influenced Dürer, especially in his choice of subjects, his types of face, and treatment of the nude. Dürer's training as a goldsmith no doubt helped him to see that the delicate graver-work of Barbari, however useful for artistic fame, was of inferior commercial value to the firmer and more durable work of the Schongauer school.

To this, which may be termed the Barbari period of Dürer's career, belong the four prints *The Rape of Amymone* (*Das Meerwunder*), *Hercules* (*Eifersucht* or *Hahnreih*), *The Four Naked Women*, and *The Dream*, all remarkable for the studies of the nude, the elaborate landscape backgrounds and accessories, and the general obscurity of their meaning. In the *Hercules* certain figures are taken directly from a drawing adapted from a North Italian engraving of *The Death of Orpheus*, and brought home by Dürer from Italy in 1494; the figure of Deianeira (if this be the right interpretation) is borrowed from the drawn copy of Mantegna's *Fight of Tritons* of the same date. The whole composition is, however, worked up into a group which is thoroughly Dürer's own, and forms perhaps the most important and instructive of his early engravings. The subject is obscure, and it is sometimes called *The Effects of Jealousy* (*Eifersucht*); but it is spoken of by Dürer himself as *Ercules*, and probably is a mediæval rendering of the story of Nessus and Deianeira, a similar subject occurring in later series of the *Labours of Hercules*, one in a series of French engravings attributed to Geoffroy Tory, and executed about 1529, being obviously based on Dürer's composition. In *The Rape of Amymone* (the *Meerwunder*, as Dürer himself calls it) a nude nymph is borne away on the back of Glaucus, a marine deity; the composition offers similar types, but still greater affinity to the work of Barbari. It appears to be based on a drawing of *The Rape of Europa*, which is accompanied on

the same sheet by some studies of lions' heads, traditionally said to have been done in Venice, and two figures immediately copied from Barbari. This group was probably altered by Dürer to the more obscure fable, in order to introduce the figure of Glaucus with its resemblance to Barbari's *Triton and Nymph*. In *The Four Naked Women*, the first engraving by Dürer with a date, and also the first which bears his monogram in its familiar state, the same female type occurs: the group with its enigmatical meaning, which perhaps Dürer would alone be able to explain, is probably nothing more than a group of nude studies which, by the addition of a few emblematical accessories, has been converted by Dürer into an allegory of obscure import. It is characteristic of much of Dürer's engraved work that the central motive of the work is to present some study in draughtsmanship, and by adding certain accessory objects—what he himself would call his "traumwerk"—to invest the whole composition with a mysterious significance. So in *The Dream* the nude female figure is obviously the chief motive, the allegory of the sleeping student being analogous to that in Barbari's engraving *Custodi nos dormientes*.

The popularity and commercial success of Dürer's engravings are shown by the rapidity with which pirate copies were made and put upon the market. The chief purveyors of these copies were Israhel van Meckenem, a goldsmith of Bocholt in Westphalia, where he kept a workshop, from which, until his death in 1503, issued numerous copies of the engravings of the Master E. S., Martin Schongauer, and eventually Dürer; and Wenzel von Olmütz,<sup>1</sup> who devoted his attention chiefly to the works of Schongauer, the Master P. W. of Cologne, and Dürer. Copies by Meckenem exist of *The Holy Family with the Locust*, *The Promenade*, and *The Four Naked Women*. The last two were also copied by Wenzel with *Hercules*, *The Rape of Amymone*, *The Dream*, and others of Dürer's early engravings. It is an argument against the publication of Barbari's engravings in Nuremberg or anywhere in Germany that had

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps necessary to point out that the otherwise admirable Life of Dürer by the late Dr. M. Thausing of Vienna (translated into English and edited by F. A. Eaton) is marred by an unfortunate identification of the engraver W. with M. Wolgemut, Dürer's master, instead of with the mere copyist Wenzel, whose authorship of these engravings has been clearly proved by Dr. Max Lehrs of Dresden.



they been known and circulated in Germany they could hardly have escaped the vigilance of these and other pirates.

Allusion has been made to the elaborate landscape backgrounds of some of these engravings. Dürer was from an early age a careful student of nature, and a number of drawings have been preserved, views of scenery in or near Nuremberg, which are minutely executed in a kind of gouache or in water-colours, perhaps the earliest use of these for purely pictorial art, as opposed to that of the illuminist or miniature-painter. In the British Museum there is a fascinating drawing of the river Pegnitz near Nuremberg, in which there stands on an island one of those tall gabled houses which formed part of the outworks of a fortified city. This building, the "Weierhaus" of the drawing, existed until quite lately. It was introduced by Dürer into the background of one of his most attractive engravings, *The Virgin and Child with the Monkey*, one which was quickly pirated by Wenzel von Olmütz and others. Dürer's hand was now strong and precise upon the copper, and the smaller engravings of *The Virgin with Flowing Hair on a Crescent*, the two *St. Sebastians*, *The Virgin and St. Anne*, *Justice*, *The Standard Bearer*, and *The Man of Sorrows*, all executed in the simple line manner, show a great advance on the smaller prints of a few years back.

Copperplate-engraving by no means occupied all Dürer's time. Painting was still his most cherished art, the Mantegna-like altarpiece at Dresden being his first important work, in which the centre group of the Virgin and Child is full of the small incidents of German home-life which Dürer so frequently introduced, while the figures of St. Anthony and St. Sebastian on the wings are powerful studies from the life. In this picture also occur the child-angels in which Dürer specially delighted. For the next few years his paintings were chiefly portraits, such as those of his father (1497), now at Sion House; more than one portrait of a fair Madonna-like maiden of the Fürleger family; various members of the Tucher family; the wonderful portrait of Oswolt Krell (1499), now at Munich; and his own portrait in gaily coloured dress (1498), now at Madrid. With his pen and pencil he was never idle, and wood-engraving now revealed to him special opportunities for the use of his skill as a draughtsman. The *Briefmaler* and *Formschneider*, male and female, were well known in Nuremberg among craftsmen for

many years before Dürer. The art of wood-engraving had risen little above the level of a mechanical craft until the time of Koberger, who first called in the assistance of superior draughtsmen. It was Dürer, however, who by perfecting the skill of the wood-engraver and by means of his own admirable designs on the woodblock first brought the art to rank high in the hierarchy of the arts. Before his time, the woodcut as a separate picture in black and white, independent of colour, unaccompanied by explanatory text, and used for ornamental and not for mere utilitarian purposes, could hardly be said to exist.

Dürer, as has been seen, very probably worked in his boyhood as a *Briefmaler* or *Formschneider* for Koberger at Nuremberg, and almost certainly for Amerbach at Basle: witness the *St. Jerome* woodblock of 1492. At Venice he would have seen what beautiful results could be obtained by care both in designing and cutting the woodblocks for the ornaments and illustrations of books. In Venice, too, were produced at this date fine woodcuts on a very large scale; but it is doubtful whether any of these were published anterior to *The Apocalypse* of Dürer. So Dürer now set up for himself a working studio in his father's house at Nuremberg, and, bringing his own early training to bear on his assistants, inaugurated a new era of wood-engraving as a pictorial art.

The earliest woodcut thus produced by Dürer appears to be *The Men's Bath*, a group of nude men in one of the open-air public baths in Nuremberg. The town was noted for its many baths in the ever-useful Pegnitz, and its cobbler poet, Hans Sachs, chronicles these public baths as among its chief glories. Here no doubt came Dürer very often in pursuit of his studies of the nude. The drawing of this woodcut, and that for *The Women's Bath*, dated 1496, and preserved at Bremen, of which a woodcut also exists, though possibly not published in Dürer's lifetime, were made in this way, and the engraving of *The Four Naked Women*, mentioned before, was probably composed from similar studies. Drawings of these baths also exist, done by Dürer in later years. The youthful spectator gazing over the palisade in *The Men's Bath* is perhaps the young artist himself. On the same scale, and drawn in the same bold and masterly manner, are the woodcuts of *Samson and the Lion*, *The Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints in Nicomedia*, *Hercules* (another obscure version



of one of the *Labours*), *The Knight and Foot-soldier* (an equestrian study similar to, though on a larger scale, the engravings of *The Little Courier* and *The Lady on Horseback*), and *The Holy Family with the Hares*, in which the animals disport themselves in gay *insouciance* of the solemnity



*The Virgin and Child.* Woodcut title-page to "*The Life of Mary*," by A. Dürer (reduced).

of their surroundings. But Dürer was meanwhile planning a work to be engraved on wood which has remained one of the great achievements of the graphic arts, which called out all his artistic skill and invention, and which reflects not only the internal thoughts and aspirations of Dürer's

own mind, but the sentiments and emotions of the age in which he lived. This was the famous series of illustrations to *The Apocalypse*, the trumpet-call, or *réveille*, as it may be called, of the Reformation.

Two events of singular importance occurred during Dürer's *Wanderjahre*—the accessions of a new Pope and a new Emperor. Under any circumstances these events would have been exciting enough, but the characters of the two men thus elevated were so remarkable that there was hardly a human being in the civilised world who was not in some way or other affected by them. In 1492 the infamous Roderigo Borgia was elected Pope under the title of Alexander VI., and in August 1493 Maximilian of Austria, who had already acquired by marriage the sovereignty of the Netherlands, succeeded his father as Emperor of Germany.

The excesses and exactions of the Papacy soon began to excite murmurs of disapprobation, especially in Germany, where the printing-press had now opened the gates of knowledge to the laity and afforded a channel for the expression of criticism and free thought. From the printing-presses at Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Basle there poured forth a stream of literature with which all the allied powers of autocracy and priesthood were inadequate to cope. Theology no longer kept the key turned on the human intellect. The writings of the ancients in poetry and philosophy, the *Literæ Humaniores* of the schools, brought men to consider man for man's sake, as well as for God's. Authors of their own country began to be read as well as the classics or the writings of the Church Fathers. No town was so well adapted to receive and foster the new ideas as Nuremberg, with its burgher government and commerical intercourse with other countries, and by its daily practice of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The great book-merchant of Nuremberg, Koberger, must be regarded as one of the pioneers of the Reformation. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his godson Albrecht Dürer was on terms of friendship with the leading men of culture and learning in Nuremberg. Among these were Conrad Celtes, Maximilian's poet laureate; Peter Dannhäuser, author of the *Archetypus Triumphantis Romæ*; Lazarus Spengler, the town secretary, poet, jurist, theologian, and friend of Luther and Melanchthon; Melchior Pfizing, provost of St. Sebald, court poet and polisher of Maximilian's verses; and, above all,

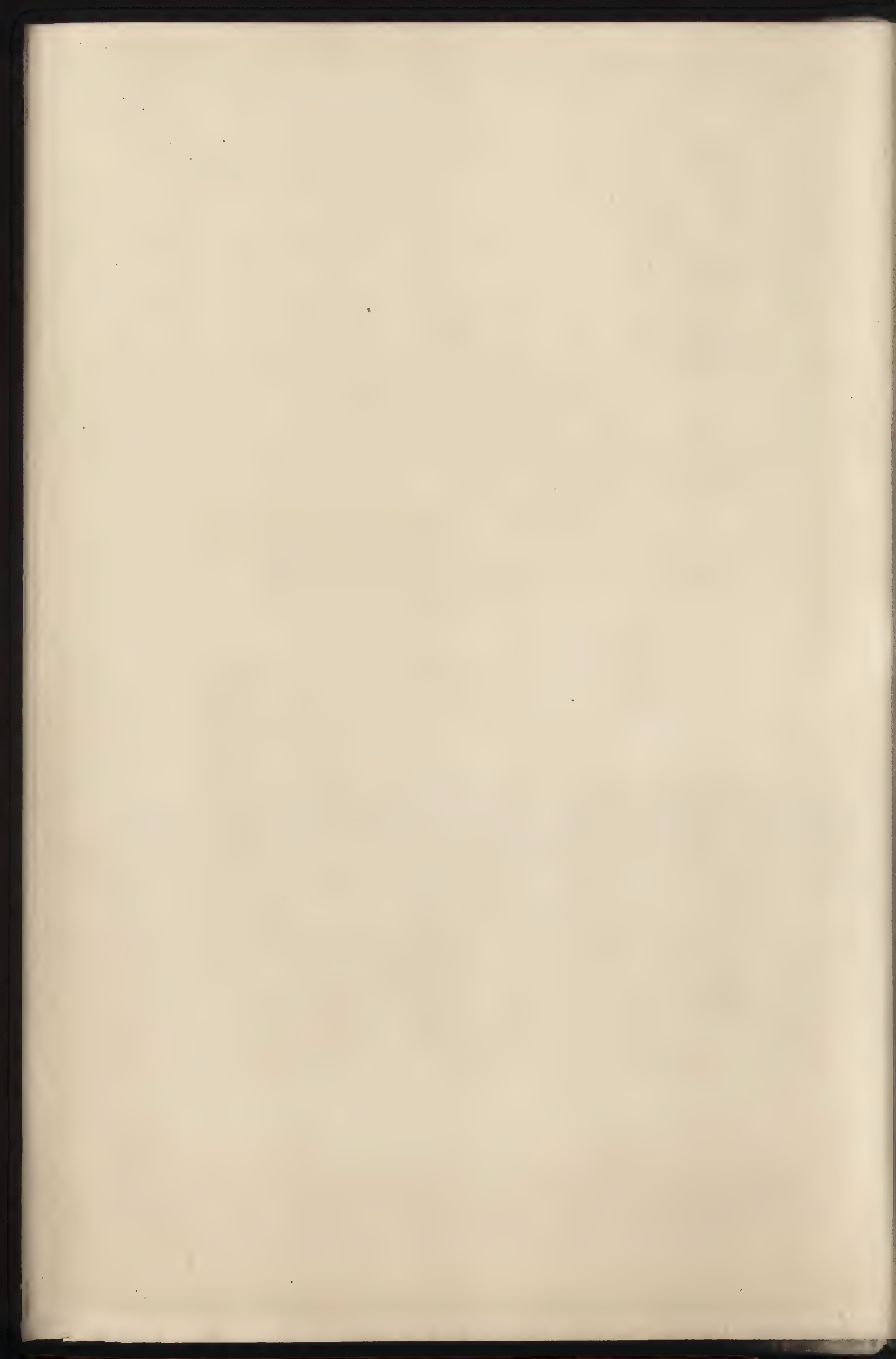














Willibald Pirkheimer. The friendship of Dürer and Pirkheimer is famous in history, but it is difficult to say for certain when and where they first met. Although Dürer was born in part of a house which belonged to a member of the Pirkheimer family, it could hardly have been there that the two first met. Pirkheimer, who was about six months older than Dürer, was born on December 5, 1470, at Eichstädt, where his father was then living. He was educated there, and went in 1490 to Italy, where he remained seven years, studying Greek and jurisprudence at Padua and Pavia. He did not settle in Nuremberg till 1497. He was well known to Maximilian, and intrusted by the Emperor with an imperial command in the Swiss war of 1499. It must have been during his visit to Italy that Dürer was first brought into contact with the clever, lusty, hot-headed young Pirkheimer, in every way a great contrast to so quiet and refined a student-artist as Dürer. The only traces of coarseness in the whole of Dürer's works or writings have reference to or were suggested by Pirkheimer. Pirkheimer was a good scholar and writer, and doubtless assisted Dürer a great deal in this way, since Dürer, though an indefatigable student, does not seem to have had much acquaintance with Latin or Greek. Yet much as Pirkheimer wrote and studied, valued as he was by his contemporaries, it is entirely due to his friendship with Dürer that posterity bestows one glance upon his countenance, or fingers the leaves of any of his literary productions.

These Humanist friends of Dürer had a large share in the promotion of the Reformation. Reform, and not revolution, was in the air. The contest against the immoralities of the Borgian clique at Rome, against the traffic in indulgences, or against the attempted suppression of the freedom of the press, was in no way directed against the main dogmas or practices of the Catholic Church. To Dürer, among the rest, Mary was still the Mother of Christ and the Queen of Heaven. Saints and relics were as great an object of reverence as before. Only there was working in the minds of the German people the idea that a new age was soon about to open upon the world—an age of freedom, goodness, and humanity which they believed to be the long-awaited millennium, and to have been foreshadowed in the Bible by the Apocalypse of St. John.

The invention of printing was followed quickly by the translation of the Bible from Latin into German. The importance attached to the

Apocalypse is shown by the number of illustrations to it in the Bible first published by Quentel at Cologne in 1480, and by Koberger again at Nuremberg in 1483. As this edition of Koberger's was published when Dürer was a boy of twelve, it was no doubt the object of his constant study. Hence his illustrations of the Apocalypse follow closely in the lines of those in Koberger's Bible. The strange, awe-inspiring, almost bizarre imagery of the Apocalypse appealed strongly to an imagination like that of Dürer, with its creative instincts and dreamy enthusiasm. Adhering closely to the text, he produced a series of original creations in pictorial art which carry the spectator away by the strength and boldness of their conception. These woodcuts are too well known to need detailed description here, and words would fail at any time to convey any idea of them. Allusion must, however, be made to the beautiful serene landscapes in the lower part of *The Throne set in Heaven* and *The Archangel Michael's Combat with the Dragon*; to the all-compelling majesty and force of *The Four Riders*, with its grim figure of Death trampling on the human race, or of *The Four Angels of the Euphrates*; and to the vivid realism of the falling star in *The Opening of the Seventh Seal*. Reminiscences of Dürer's Italian journey sometimes occur, for in *The Opening of the Fifth and Sixth Seal* a group of terrified women is borrowed directly from Mantegna, and whereas in *The Woman Clothed in the Sun* a regular placid German type is displayed, in *Babylon the Great* the Scarlet Woman is a Venetian courtesan, such as Carpaccio has painted in a picture in the Museo Correr at Venice. In the *St. Michael* both the figure of the saint and the demons floating in the air are reminiscent of Dürer's precursor Schongauer. Throughout is symbolised the triumph of Christ over the powers of the Emperor and the Pope, the latter being specially selected as the object of the Divine vengeance. Two editions of the Apocalypse were published by Dürer in 1498, one with German and one with Latin text, printed under his own immediate supervision and perhaps with his own hands.

With the exception of a few illustrations to the works of Conrad Celtes, Dürer's attention for the next few years was chiefly devoted to painting or to engraving on copper. The care which he bestowed on every picture or engraving accounts for the comparatively small number of works produced by him at this period. The pictures completed





*The Babylonish Whore. From a woodcut in "The Apocalypse," by A. Dürer.*

during the next few years from 1499 to 1504 were the two *Pietàs*, or *Lamentations over Christ's Body*—one at Munich, and the other, originally painted for the Holzschuher family, still at Nuremberg; *The Crucifixion*, now at Ober St. Veit, painted in 1502 for Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, whose portrait, painted by Dürer about this date, is now at Berlin; *The Nativity*, with the portraits of the two Baumgärtners in armour, now at Munich; and *The Adoration of the Kings*, painted in 1504, and now in the Uffizi at Florence. Ever since his first journey to Venice, and probably in consequence of his intercourse with Jacopo dei Barbari, Dürer had spent much time on making the most minute studies of natural objects, animals, insects, vegetables, and the like. Nearly all such studies can be traced among the accessories to his paintings and engravings, and they are often interpolated in bewildering profusion, not unfrequently, especially in his later works, disturbing the balance of the composition. The copperplate-engravings of these years are *Apollo and Diana*, *St. George on Foot*, *The Arms of Death* (1503), *The Virgin Giving Suck to the Child* (1503), *The Nativity* (1504), and *Adam and Eve* (1504). Of these *The Virgin and Child* is one of the sweetest and tenderest renderings of the subject which Dürer produced, and also one of his best engravings, and *The Nativity*, or the *Weihnacht* (Christmas), as Dürer himself called it, is unrivalled for the quiet, placid, happy domesticity of the scene, as well as for the consummate skill of the perspective and general composition. The *Adam and Eve* ranks amongst the most important of Dürer's works. In it are seen the results of Dürer's studies into the proportions of the human body, and the triumph of his attempts to produce a chiaroscuro effect in a copperplate-engraving. Moreover, Dürer has left so many drawings for this composition, and also unfinished states of the engraving, that it is possible to trace its whole history. Starting from the studies of proportion, instigated by Jacopo dei Barbari, Dürer is seen, first, entering into competition with one of Barbari's engravings, *Apollo and Diana*, with a similar engraving of his own; then taking the motive of Barbari's engravings in a drawing of his own (in the British Museum), but altering the figure of Apollo into a version of the Apollo Belvedere. After experimenting with this Apollo as an Æsculapius (drawing in Beckerath collection at Berlin), he, by reversing the figure of Apollo, turned it into Adam, as in the engraving; to this he added a companion





*The Birth of the Virgin Mary. Woodcut from "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reduced).*



drawing of the figure of Eve (both these last drawings are in the Albertina collection at Vienna), and then combined the two figures in one composition (drawing in the Lanna collection at Prague) as in the engraving, though in reverse. The unfinished states of the engraving show how carefully Dürer elaborated the dark masses of the background in order to throw into relief the nude bodies, in the earliest state these figures being left in outline. Thus the real motive of this wonderful engraving is to produce ideal figures of a man and a woman as exemplified by Adam and Eve before the Fall. Similar motives are evident in two well-known and admirable engravings of 1505—*The Little White Horse* and *The Great Horse*, the motive in each case being to produce an exact figure of a horse, Dürer being nearly as much interested in the proportions of the horse as in those of the human body. The accessories which invest these two engravings with a mystic character are merely the additions of Dürer's own fantasy, in order to make the composition more complete.

Meanwhile Dürer, while producing a number of wood-engravings of lesser importance, had commenced another series, to be published in book-form, and selected for this purpose the life of the Virgin Mary from her birth to her deification. In this series there is none of the majesty or terror of *The Apocalypse*. The story is told in incidents of a reposeful nature, with considerable humour in some of the earlier scenes and deep pathos in the later. The scene of *The Flight into Egypt* is reminiscent of the earlier engraving of the same subject by Martin Schongauer; but otherwise the series is replete with incidents of a domestic character, such as the chattering housewives in the scene of *The Birth of Mary*, or the peddling stallholder in that of *The Presentation in the Temple*. In others, such as *The Holy Family in the Carpenter's Shop*, or in the final scene of *The Adoration of Mary*, Dürer fills the scene with the child-angels in whose gambols he took so much delight. It seems probable also that about this time Dürer commenced his series of *The Large Passion* on the same scale and with the same note of earnestness as *The Apocalypse*, since the woodcut of *The Holy Women Lamenting over the Body of Christ* was among those copied by Marcantonio, with Dürer's monogram affixed. Both series, however—*The Life of Mary* and *The Great Passion*—remained unfinished, when a break of an important nature occurred in Dürer's life, the cause of which has been interpreted in various ways.





*The Holy Family. Woodcut from "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reducea).*

### CHAPTER III.

*Dürer's home-life—His portraits—Second visit to Venice—Marcantonio—Letters to Pirckheimer—Return to Nuremberg—Large paintings—Engravings and woodcuts—St. Eustace and Nemesis—The Passion—Dürer's house—Dürer as a poet—Dry points and etchings.*

DÜRER had come to occupy a prominent position among the citizens of Nuremberg. He was on terms of friendship with all the leading patrician families, whose armorial bearings are so prominent in the great churches of Nuremberg : Kress, Tucher, Nützel, Harsdorffer, Volckamer, Baumgärtner, Ebner, Holzschuher, Löffelholz, and the great banking family of Imhoff. Powerful and rich as many of these patrician families were, the municipal government of Nuremberg seems always to have obtained a reputation for closeness and thriftiness in expenditure. Patronage of art does not seem to have been a desirable charge on the citizens' pockets, so that such commissions for works of art as were given at all were usually for the honour or gratification of some private individual or family. In this respect the Republic of Nuremberg presents a strong contrast to the Venetian Republic, which gloried in the artistic decoration of their streets and public buildings at the expense of the citizens themselves. Venice was ever extending its borders and its privileges, while Nuremberg drew them tighter and tighter, as its citizens did the strings of their purses. Painting, too, was a free trade in Nuremberg. No protection was offered to native artists as at Antwerp and elsewhere. The principle may have been a good one, but it effectually checked the production of any native art of a high class in Nuremberg. Wealth therefore Dürer, as an artist, seems never to have been able to acquire. In 1502 he lost his father, and thereby was forced to find a home for himself and his wife Agnes, into which, in 1504, he received his widowed mother and his boy brother Hans. This must have been a serious



addition to his incumbrances, while the demands made upon his society by Pirkheimer and others, with his evident taste for fine clothes and good living, must have caused the thrifty Agnes many heart-searchings, and perhaps tended to acidulate her temper. The remarks of Pirkheimer about Dürer's wife after his friend's death have led to the unfortunate Agnes being set down as a modern Xantippe, and, to combat this, recent writers have rushed into the other extreme in order to clear her entirely of all blame. There seems no reason to believe that she made Dürer's life unhappy, or that she was other than a careful, thrifty housewife, on whom depended all the economy and stability of the household. Dürer was of too dreamy and docile a nature to be able to look properly after his own affairs, or to mind leaving them in the hands of his wife. Romance was entirely absent from his domestic life. His marriage was childless, and this was doubtless a deep sorrow to Dürer, for in all his works he shows a love for little children, and a keen appreciation of the humours of child-life. This lack of interest in his home-life no doubt led him to give much time to the society of his friends, which would account for any hostility shown by Agnes to Pirkheimer and others. It is noteworthy, however, that while Dürer has left most touching records of his love for his father and mother, he makes but little more than mere mention of his wife. It is always "my dear father and my dear mother," but never "my dear wife."

Dürer's appearance at this time is well known to posterity. No artist, except perhaps Rembrandt, took so much delight in the portrayal of his own self. Starting with the boyish drawings at Vienna and Erlangen, then come the portraits of 1493 and 1498. Already in the last the gay garments and carefully curled hair show that Dürer was fully conscious of his own personal attractions. The most famous portrait is that now at Munich, executed shortly after 1500. Joachim Camerarius,



*Winged Genius. From the engraving known as "The Dream," by A. Dürer.*

writing of Dürer after his death, says that "Nature bestowed on him a body remarkable in build and stature, and not unworthy of the noble mind it contained. His head was intelligent (*argutum*), his eyes flashing, his nose nobly formed, and, as the Greeks say, τετράγωνον. His neck was rather long, his chest broad, his body not too stout, his thighs muscular, his legs firm and steady. But his fingers—you would vow you had never seen anything more elegant." These features are clearly shown in the Munich portrait, and especially the beautiful hands. Camerarius goes on to say that "almost with awe have we gazed upon the bearded face of the man, drawn by himself, in the manner we have described, with the brush on the canvas and without any previous sketch. The locks of the beard are almost a cubit long, so exquisitely and cleverly drawn," &c. No one who gazes on the Munich portrait can fail to see in it the delineation of a gentle, serene, pure, and trustful character. The whole portrait is strongly suggestive of the ideal type of Jesus Christ, and in fact Dürer perceived this himself, as there is hardly any representation of Christ by Dürer which does not recall the features of the man himself. Looking on the Munich portrait, one is reminded of Roydon's lines on Sir Philip Sidney :—

A sweet attractive kind of grace ;  
A half assurance given by looks,  
Continual comfort in a face,  
The lineaments of gospel books,  
I trow that countenance cannot lie  
Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.

The break in Dürer's life was caused by his decision to pay a second visit to Venice. His fame as an artist had preceded him there through his engravings, which were not only appreciated but copied freely and often very closely by the engravers in Venice and Bologna. Zoan Andrea, Giulio Campagnola, Nicoletto da Modena, Robetta, Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, all paid homage to Dürer by the use which they made of his engravings. Chief among them, however, was the famous engraver Marcantonio Raimondi, who literally pirated Dürer's engravings, copying even his signature, translating even the woodcuts, including the unfinished series of *The Life of Mary*, on to copper. It would seem that it was by copying Dürer that Marcantonio, like the Wierixes in later days, obtained his noted skill as an engraver.





*Portrait of Albrecht Dürer by himself; from the painting in the Alte Pinakothek at Munich.*

In his account of Marcantonio, Vasari asserts that it was owing to the piracy of his engravings that Dürer came to Venice. The inaccuracies in Vasari's account have led to this story being regarded as a fable, but in all probability Dürer took some steps to prevent the circulation of fraudulent copies with his signature, for the copies of Dürer's *Little Passion*, made by Marcantonio in after years, do not bear Dürer's monogram; and Dürer, on his return to Nuremberg, not only issued a manifesto against such pirates, but obtained a privilege from the town council to protect him.<sup>1</sup> It was probably through Marcantonio that Dürer's work was brought to the notice of Raphael, who sent Dürer a drawing of his own in exchange for a specimen of Dürer's work, and is said to have always had Dürer's prints at hand in his studio.

Dürer's second visit to Venice was in quite a new character. Whereas, on the former visit, he was a shy, retiring student, he was now the famous engraver, the creator of those wonderful prints which one bought under the arches of the Piazza in Venice. A new race, however, of young painters had sprung up, including Titian and Giorgione, who seem to have looked askance at first on the advent of their northern

<sup>1</sup> The story as given by Vasari is as follows: "Intanto capitando in Vinezia alcuni fiaminghi con molte carte intagliate e stampate in legno ed in rame d'Alberto Duro, vennero vedute a Marcantonio in su la piazza di San Marco: perchè stupefatto della maniera del lavoro e del modo di fare d'Alberto, spese in dette carte quasi quanti danari aveva portati da Bologna, e fra l'altre cose comperò la Passione de Gesù Cristo intagliata in 36 pezzi di legno in quarto foglio, stata stampata di poco dal detto Alberto: la quale opera cominciava dal peccare d'Adamo ed essere cacciato di Paradiso dall' Angelo, infino al mandare dello Spirito Santo. E considerato Marcantonio quanto onore ed utile si avrebbe potuto acquistare, che si fusse dato a quell'arte in Italia, si dispose di volervi attendere con ogni accuratezza e diligenza; e così cominciò a contrafare di quegli intagli d'Alberto, studiando il modo de' tratti ed il tutto delle stampe che avea comperate: le quali per la novità e bellezza loro erano in tanta riputazione, che ognuno cercava d'averne. Avendo dunque contrafatto in rame d'intaglio grosso, come era il legno che aveva intagliato Alberto, tutta la detta Passione e vita di Cristo in 36 carte; e fattovi il segno che Alberto faceva nelle sue opere, cioè questo, A.D.; riuscì tanto simile, di maniera che non sapendo nessuno ch' elle fussero fatte da Marcantonio, erano credute d'Alberto, e per opere di lui vendute e comperate: la qual cosa essendo scritta in Fiandra ad Alberto, e mandatogli una di dette Passioni contrafatte da Marcantonio, venne Alberto in tante collera, che partitosi di Fiandra se ne venne a Vinezia, e ricorso alla Signoria, si querelò di Marcantonio; ma però non ottenne altro, se non che Marcantonio non facesse più il nome e nè il segno sopradetto d'Alberto nelle sue opere."



rival. Even Dürer found a change. Writing to Pirkheimer from Venice, on February 7, 1506, he says :—

“I wish that you were here at Venice ! There are so many nice fellows among the Italians, who seek my society more and more, which is very soothing to one’s heart, learned men of importance, good players on the lute and the pipe, with great knowledge in painting, with much noble sentiment and honest virtue, and they treat me with great honour and friendship. On the other hand, there are also the most untrustworthy, perjured, thievish rascals as ever lived on the earth. Did one not know this, one would think them the nicest folk on earth. As for myself, I cannot help laughing when they talk to me. They know that their rascality is notorious, but nobody minds.

“I have many good friends among the Italians, who warn me not to eat and drink with their painters. They, however, are very hostile to me, and counterfeit my work in churches and wherever they come across it ; afterwards they abuse it and say that it is not antique style, and, therefore, cannot be good. Giambellino however it was who praised my work highly before several nobles. He wanted very much to have some of my work, and came himself to me and begged me to do something for him, which he could pay well for. And all people tell me how upright a man he is, so that I am equally friendly to him. He is very old, and is still the best in painting here.

“And the thing which pleased me so much eleven years ago pleases me no more ; had I not seen it myself I should not have believed any one else. Moreover, I let you know that there are many better painters here than Master Jakob, who is again abroad ; yet Anton Kolb is ready to swear an oath that no better painter lives than Master Jakob. Others scoff at him, and say that were he so good he would have remained here, and so on.”

In this last paragraph it can hardly be doubted that the thing with which he was no longer satisfied was the art of Jacopo dei Barbari. The rising stars of Giorgione and Titian cannot fail to have impressed Dürer, and to have dispelled the illusion under which he laboured as to Barbari’s proper rank as a painter. Barbari had been to Nuremberg, and had returned to Venice, probably to execute for Kolb the great woodcut view of Venice which that merchant commissioned and

published in 1500. He had then gone north again in the service of Philip of Burgundy, and was destined to finish his days probably at Brussels in the service of Maximilian's daughter Margaret, then Regent of the Netherlands.

Though ready to acknowledge Dürer's pre-eminence as an engraver, the Venetian artists, always with the exception of the aged Bellini, seem to have denied his merits as a painter. This may have stirred up the German colony near the Rialto, who had just rebuilt their Fondaco, to which was attached the small church of S. Bartolommeo. The Nuremberg merchants gave Dürer a commission to paint an altarpiece for the choir in this church, in which was the German burial-place. This painting represented *The Feast of the Rosary*, and contained portraits of Maximilian, Julius II., Dürer, Pirkheimer, and several German merchants. It is satisfactory to know that the Venetian painters fully recognised the merits of this work, and treated Dürer with greater honour. Bellini even paid a visit to Dürer to learn how he managed to execute such marvellously fine hair-painting, and was astonished to see Dürer do it straight off.

While he was in Italy Dürer visited Bologna, "to learn the secrets of the art of perspective, which a man is willing to teach me," where, as his friend Scheurl testified, he was received by the artist colony, and entertained as the prince of painters. His fame also reached Mantua, where the aged Mantegna was lying on his death-bed. Camerarius narrates that "while Andrea was lying ill at Mantua he heard that Albrecht was in Italy, and had him summoned to his side at once, in order that he might fortify Albrecht's facility and certainty of hand with scientific knowledge and principles. For Andrea often lamented, in conversation with his friends, that Albrecht's facility in drawing had not been granted to him, nor his knowledge to Albrecht. On receiving the message, Albrecht, leaving all other engagements, prepared for the journey without delay. But before he could reach Mantua, Andrea was dead [September 13, 1506], and Dürer used to say that this was the saddest event in all his life; for, high as Dürer stood, his great and lofty mind was ever striving after something yet above him."

Another great artist with whose works Dürer now became acquainted was Leonardo da Vinci. It does not seem likely that the



two artists ever met, but he may have been brought into relation with him through Luca Pacioli, the author of the book *De Divina Proportione*, which appeared at Venice in 1509, and an intimate friend of the great Leonardo. Dürer would naturally be deeply interested in the proportion theories of Leonardo and Pacioli. He was certainly acquainted with some engravings of Leonardo's school, representing a curious circle of concentric scrollwork on a black ground, one of them entitled *Accademia Leonardi Vinci*; for he himself executed six woodcuts in imitation, the *Six Knots*, as he calls them himself. Dürer was amused by and interested in all scientific or mathematical problems, but he had no real gift for scientific research.

It is remarkable that among Dürer's countless studies of the human form there are no signs of any deep study of anatomy, such as characterised the work of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci. Having trained his eye to observe accurately, he could seize and depict the minutest details of facial expression or physical construction. His nude studies of proportion are all constructed by measurement alone. He could transfer on to the canvas or the copper the exact features of the subject before him, whether human face, limbs, stag-beetle, plant of celandine, lime-tree, or marble quarry; but he merely observed, and never, like Leonardo, made a thorough and systematic investigation of nature. Had Leonardo left no paintings behind him he would still have ranked high among the leading scientists of his day, among whom he has probably as yet not been allotted the place which is his due.

It is from Dürer's letters to Pirkheimer that some knowledge of his life at Venice and Nuremberg can be gleaned. Referring to himself, they deal with his numerous commissions, chiefly for jewellery; the hostility and treachery of certain Venetian artists; the friendship of Bellini; the pictures which he has in hand; and his own clothes, in which he took a deep interest. With reference to Pirkheimer, he writes chaffingly of Pirkheimer's habits and love-affairs. It appears from them that it was with Pirkheimer's help that he came to Italy, and that Pirkheimer had promised to look after his wife and mother.

In the following extracts from his letters to Pirkheimer, some information can be gleaned concerning his domestic life. On January 6, 1506,

he writes : " All the money I hope, if God will, to put by, as with it I will pay you, for I think I need not so soon send any money either to my mother or to my wife. I left ten florins with my mother when I rode away ; she has also taken nine or ten florins for art wares ; then Dratzieher has paid her twelve florins, and I have sent her nine florins by Sebastian Imhoff. Out of that she has to pay the Pfinzings and Gärtner seven florins for their rent. I gave my wife twelve florins, and she took thirteen at Frankfurt—that makes twenty-five florins, so I think she is in no need. But if she wants anything my brother-in-law must help her till I come home, and then I will honourably repay him." Again, on April 2 : " Now on behalf of my brother [Hans], do speak to my mother, that she may have a talk with Wolgemut, as to whether he can give him work until I come back, or help him to get it with others. I would gladly have taken him with me to Venice, which would have been of use to both of us, and besides he would have been able to learn the language. But she was afraid that the sky would tumble in upon him. I beg you to look after him yourself, because it is a waste of time to trust women. Have a talk with the boy, as you can do so well, and tell him to be studious and steady until I come, and not to be a trouble to his mother, since although I cannot bring everything to pass, I will try and do my best. As for myself, I should be in no trouble, but to have to support so many is too hard for me ; moreover, no one throws his money away." This letter affords a touching glimpse of the home in Nuremberg, with the old mother cherishing her Hans, the son of her declining years, and Dürer's struggle to support the three lives of mother, brother, and wife, all dependent on his earnings. On August 18 he writes : " Thank you for one thing, for explaining to my wife in the best way how I stand ; for I know you are never lacking in wisdom. If you only had my meekness, you would have all the virtues." Finally, in October, he writes that he intends going to Bologna for eight or ten days, and then to return to Venice : " After that I shall come with the next messenger. How I shall freeze after this sun ! Here, I am a gentleman ; at home, only a parasite." In all these letters to Pirkheimer there is no trace of any affectionate epithet for his wife, but if his letters to her had been preserved they would no doubt tell a different story. What with the sale of his prints and the payment for the *Feast of the*



*Rosary* and other pictures, Dürer made money enough at Venice to pay off his debts to Pirkheimer and others. He then prepared to leave Venice. So much honoured was he now there that the Venetian Council actually offered him a sinecure post with a good salary, if he would only take up a permanent residence in their city. The love of his home and native town, however, prevailed with Dürer, and early in 1507 he was back at Nuremberg, for—

Bright and fierce and fickle is the south,  
But dark and true and tender is the north.

TENNYSON.

Dürer probably proceeded leisurely on his home journey across the Brenner Pass. He has left numerous records of places which he passed, either coming or going, laboriously executed and brightly coloured as before in gouache or body colour.

With his return to Nuremberg a new epoch commences in Dürer's life. He had gained the summit of his ambition—success as a painter. Commissions now came in for paintings. The Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, for whom Dürer had in 1504 painted *The Adoration of the Kings*, commanded a large picture, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints under King Sapor of Persia*. This subject may have been chosen by Dürer himself in consequence of the numerous opportunities for the treatment of the nude body, and he had already dealt with it in his first series of large folio woodcuts. The trouble taken by him in composing the picture is shown by the sketch in the Albertina collection at Vienna, which is a more pleasing composition than the finished picture now in the Imperial Gallery in the same city. The picture took Dürer a long time, and, as he says, cost him more in time and money than he received in payment for it. Before it was finished he received a commission from a rich merchant of Frankfurt to paint a picture of *The Assumption of the Virgin*. A somewhat acrimonious correspondence has been preserved between Dürer and Heller concerning this picture, the price to be paid for it, and the delays in completing it, which makes a jarring note in the peaceful tenour of Dürer's life. The letters give, however, an interesting insight into Dürer's method of work, and explain how difficult it would always have been for Dürer,

with his minute labour and care, to make any profit from paintings on such a large scale. "It brings me no gain," he writes to Heller, "and robs me of my time"; and, again, "of ordinary pictures I will in a year paint a pile which no one would believe it possible for one man to do in the time. But very careful nicety does not pay. So henceforth I shall stick to my engraving, and had I done so before I should to-day have been a richer man by 1,000 florins."

In spite of his determination not to paint such a picture, Dürer in the same year accepted a commission to paint a large picture of *The Trinity and All Saints* for Matthäus Landauer of Nuremberg. This picture, now at Vienna, is the most successful of all Dürer's paintings. In it, as in the other two large pictures, he introduced his own portrait, this time standing in the lower part of the picture in a landscape of serene and ideal beauty, suggestive of the scenery of the Lago di Garda.

While in Venice, Dürer made numerous drawings, which can be recognised by the paper which he used there. He continued his favourite studies in proportion, still trying to frame ideal bodies for Adam and Eve in their state of innocence before the Fall. In 1507 he painted two such figures, which greatly excel in beauty the engraving of 1504, and show the softening influence of the Venetian atmosphere.

It was on engraving, therefore, that Dürer still depended for the support of his household. He obtained in 1508 a privilege from the Nuremberg Town Council to prevent the sale of fraudulent copies of his prints. Soon after his return from Italy he executed two of his most important copperplate-engravings, the *St. Eustace* and *The Great Fortune*, or, more properly, *Nemesis*. The *St. Eustace* is one of the best known and most popular of Dürer's engravings. Every detail is most carefully wrought out in the figures and the landscape, both in the foreground and in the distance. In this engraving, however, a somewhat over-elaboration of detail produces a disturbance of the planes in the composition, resulting in apparent errors of perspective. The high castellated hill in the background is adapted from one of the gouache landscape studies made by Dürer in Italy, called by him *Ein Welsch Schloss*. The *Nemesis*—for this is certainly the title by which Dürer knew it himself—is one of Dürer's boldest conceptions on copper, though the effect is marred by





*Group of Dogs. From the engraving of "St. Eustace," by A. Dürer.*



the unpleasing and uncompromising truth with which the naked body of a German *Hausfrau* has been delineated. Apart from this defect, the minute engraving of the wings, and above all the marvellous landscape below, are among Dürer's highest achievements. The mountain valley, with the riverside village and high-roofed church on a hillock above, is obviously an Alpine scene from one of Dürer's travelling sketch-books. Some smaller copper-engravings appear also to have been executed about this date, such as *The Witch*, *The Three Genii Blowing Trumpets*, and Dürer also appears to have published for the first time an engraving of *St. George on Horseback*, the plate being dated 1505, but altered by Dürer himself to 1508. In 1508 also he engraved *The Crucifixion* (*Das Kreuz*, as he called it himself), one of his most finished works.

Finding no doubt that small prints were more marketable than large, Dürer now commenced a series of engravings on a smaller scale to illustrate the Passion of Jesus Christ. He had already shown his intense sympathy with this subject in a series of drawings made in 1504 (now in the Albertina collection), and known as *The Green Passion*, from the green paper on which they are drawn. It has been stated above that the greater part of the woodcuts of *The Great Passion* had probably been finished before he left Nuremberg. *The Passion* on copper is engraved in much the same manner as the *Adam and Eve* of 1504, but in this series Dürer surrenders his fondness for dexterous and audacious feats of draughtsmanship and chiaroscuro to the pathos and human interest of his subject. In all scenes from Christ's Passion which Dürer treated there is a sincerity and earnestness, as if the artist had lived himself through the sufferings and anguish which he delineates. Add to this the resemblance of the type of Christ to Dürer's own portrait, as in *The Veronica* of 1513, and the result is that whether Christ is lying prone or kneeling with outstretched arms in Gethsemane, standing shivering before Pilate or mocked by his enemies, or stooping to raise a lost soul from hell, it is always Dürer's own personality which adds a touch of human sympathy to the deep religious fervour of these engravings.

*The Passion* in copper was carried on for several years, and never seems to have been brought to a definite conclusion. Meanwhile Dürer resumed his labours in wood-engraving, and completed his *Life of Mary* and *The Great Passion*. The success of the earlier engravings of *The*



*Passion* in copper was probably the reason that he interrupted this series, in order to draw and superintend the execution of a similar series on wood, more rapid to complete, although running in this case to no less than thirty-six blocks. This series, which is generally known as *The Little Passion*, is perhaps the best known and most popular portion of Dürer's work. It remains, and probably will long remain, unsurpassed as a pictorial narration of the great tragedy of the Christian Faith.



*The Man of Sorrows. Title-page to "The Small Passion," on wood, by A. Dürer.*

Several of the original wood-blocks are preserved in the British Museum. In 1511 Dürer determined to publish his four series of wood-engravings in book form. He added a title to each of them, these four title-pages being among his most spirited work. Benedictus Chelidonium, a monk and a friend of Dürer, contributed an explanatory text in Latin verse to *The Life of Mary* and to the two *Passions*. The four books were issued as printed and published by Dürer himself, and *The Apocalypse* and *The*

*Life of Mary* conclude with a warning fulmination against all future pirates of the prints.

Impressum Nurnberge per Albertum Durer pictorem. Anno christiano Milleſi  
mo quíngentefimo vndecímo.

Heus tu infidiator: ac alieni laboris: & ingenij: surreptor: ne manus temerarias  
his nostris operibus inicias. caue: Scias enim a gloriosissimo Romano  
rum imperatore. Maximiliano nobis cōcessum esse: ne quis  
suppositicijs formis: has imagines imprimere: seu  
impressas per imperij limites vendere aude  
at: q̄ si per cōtemptum: seu auaricie cri  
men: sec⁹ feceris: post bonorū cō  
fiscatiōem: tibi maximum pe  
riculū subeundum  
esse certissime  
scias.

*Colophon to "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer.*

During the progress of the two small *Passions* an important change had taken place in Dürer's life at Nuremberg. After his father's death he had inherited his father's house in the street under the Veste, sharing it, however, with his brother Andreas. On his return from Venice, when he wished to set up a regular printing-press for himself with a staff of apprentices and assistants, he found this house too small, so that he purchased in 1509 a large corner house in the Zistelgasse, near the Thiergärtner Thor, in which he spent the rest of his Nuremberg life, and which exists as the Dürerhaus to this day. Subsequently he bought out his brother's interest in their paternal home, a house which is also still in existence. It was in his new house that he printed and published his four immortal series of woodcuts. He had now become one of the leading citizens of Nuremberg, and in 1509 was appointed to the office of *Genannter des Rathes*. In this same year also Dürer seems to have been moved to dabble in verse. "I composed two lines," he says himself, "each with exactly the same number of syllables, and thought I had succeeded very well." And so he became a poet; but Pirkheimer laughed at him, and Spengler wrote jeeringly, with allusions to the cobbler and his last. However, Dürer continued writing rhymes, and in 1510 actually





*The Coat of Arms, with a Cock. From an engraving by A. Dürer.*

published three broadsides with verses of his own and a woodcut at the head of the page. These were *The Schoolmaster*, *Death and the Soldier*, and *The Seven Times of the Day*. Such broadsides or flysheets were a product peculiar to Nuremberg, Hans Folz, a popular poet, having printed his poems in this way as early as 1479, while, as is well known, it was in this way that Hans Sachs circulated his. But when it came to serious publication Dürer thought better of it, relinquished poetry himself, and had recourse to his friend Chelidonium.

By this time Dürer had gathered round him a set of young apprentices, some of whom also became artists of note : in engraving, Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham ; Hans von Kulmbach in painting ; Georg Pencz in both painting and engraving ; and also Hans Leonhard Schäußelein, excellent both as painter and wood-engraver. That he employed various hands to cut his blocks is evident from the inequalities of execution in the *Little Passion* series. His principal wood-engraver however was one Hieronymus Andreae, who was probably assisted by his wife Veronica, of whom Dürer has left a drawn portrait, now in the British Museum. He now turned his attention to the possibility of shortening the process of engraving, or making the art more picturesque with greater freedom of touch. The proof impressions which have been preserved of the *Hercules* and the *Adam and Eve* show that Dürer first sketched in the composition in open line, gradually completing the details, but leaving the principal figures to the last. These outlines are freely but strongly drawn, and point to the use of the graver rather than the needle. In 1510, whether he was influenced or not by a sight of the dry-point engravings by the "Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet," he began to experiment with dry point or needle himself. In this way he produced a small engraving, *St. Veronica*, which was so delicately engraved that very few impressions could ever have been printed from it, only two being known to exist at the present day. Then in 1512 he engraved a small print of *The Man of Sorrows*, and a larger one of *St. Jerome in Penitence*. In the latter Dürer discovered that by the use of the burr on the copper he could produce a rich and velvety effect. This however was only possible for a very few impressions, and the plate quickly became a wreck. The same may be said of a somewhat larger plate engraved in the same way, *The Holy Family by the Wall*. More important however was his



being the first to make use, perhaps the actual discoverer, of the art of etching with acid on metal. It is uncertain whether Dürer borrowed this art from the armourer, or whether it was not just the other way. Nuremberg had been for years the centre of the armourer's trade, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it was chiefly transferred, through the influence of the Emperor Maximilian, to Augsburg. It was at Augsburg that etching was first practised for the decoration of armour, but it does not appear that any armour is known to have been decorated in this way before 1520. The aquafortis may have been used by the armourer for more ordinary purposes, but there is nothing to show that any person practised etching for the purpose of pictorial engraving before Dürer. In 1515, perhaps in 1514, Dürer took plates of iron, instead of the usual copper, and worked with the help of the acid on them. The earliest probably is a group of figure studies, thrown casually together on the same plate, perhaps with no real significance as a composition, being nothing more than different experiments on the same plate in biting with the acid. One figure appears to be a portrait of his brother Andreas, done from a sketch made by Dürer in 1514. In 1515 he had attained more skill in the art, producing *The Man of Sorrows Seated* and *The Agony in the Garden*—a favourite subject with Dürer, who made many drawings of it—and in 1516 *The Rape of Proserpine*, as the subject seems to be, and *The Angels with the Sudarium*. His last work in pure etching was *The Great Cannon*, in which a large gun—the *Feldschlange* of Nuremberg—with the arms of Nuremberg upon it, is surveyed by a group of soldiers and orientals, the chief figure of the latter group being borrowed from a coloured drawing of three orientals (in the Malcolm collection), dated 1514. But Dürer by no means abandoned engraving on copper with the burin. On the contrary, he now discovered that, by blending the use of the burin with the dry point or with the acid, he could produce a fuller and at the same time tenderer effect upon the copper than he could by the use of the burin alone. Dürer in his letter to Heller describes the care and labour which he bestowed on every detail of his painting, so that it may readily be assumed that he lavished the same upon his engraving. All Dürer's prints after 1510 have in the best impressions a silvery gray tone, which is quite new in the history of engraving. This Dürer attained by first working on the

plate with the needle, and then strengthening the engraving bit by bit with the burin until the required effect was produced. In this way he produced the most beautiful of his renderings of *The Virgin and Child*, in every one of which the motive of homely motherly love is as conspicuous and as touching as in the *Madonna della Sedia* or the *Madonna della Casa Tempi* of Raphael. Chief among those may be reckoned *The Virgin with the Pear* of 1511, and *The Virgin Seated by a Wall* of 1514.

The year 1511 was a busy one in wood-engraving. In this year he published several well-known woodcuts—*The Adoration of the Kings* (a kind of supplemental plate to *The Life of Mary*), *The Vision of St. Gregory*, *The Holy Family with a Lute*, the large and fine woodcuts of *The Holy Trinity*, *St. Jerome in his Cell*, and others. In the last-named woodcut it is interesting to compare the treatment of the subject with the later and more famous engraving in 1514.





*St. Jerome. Woodcut by A. Dürer.*

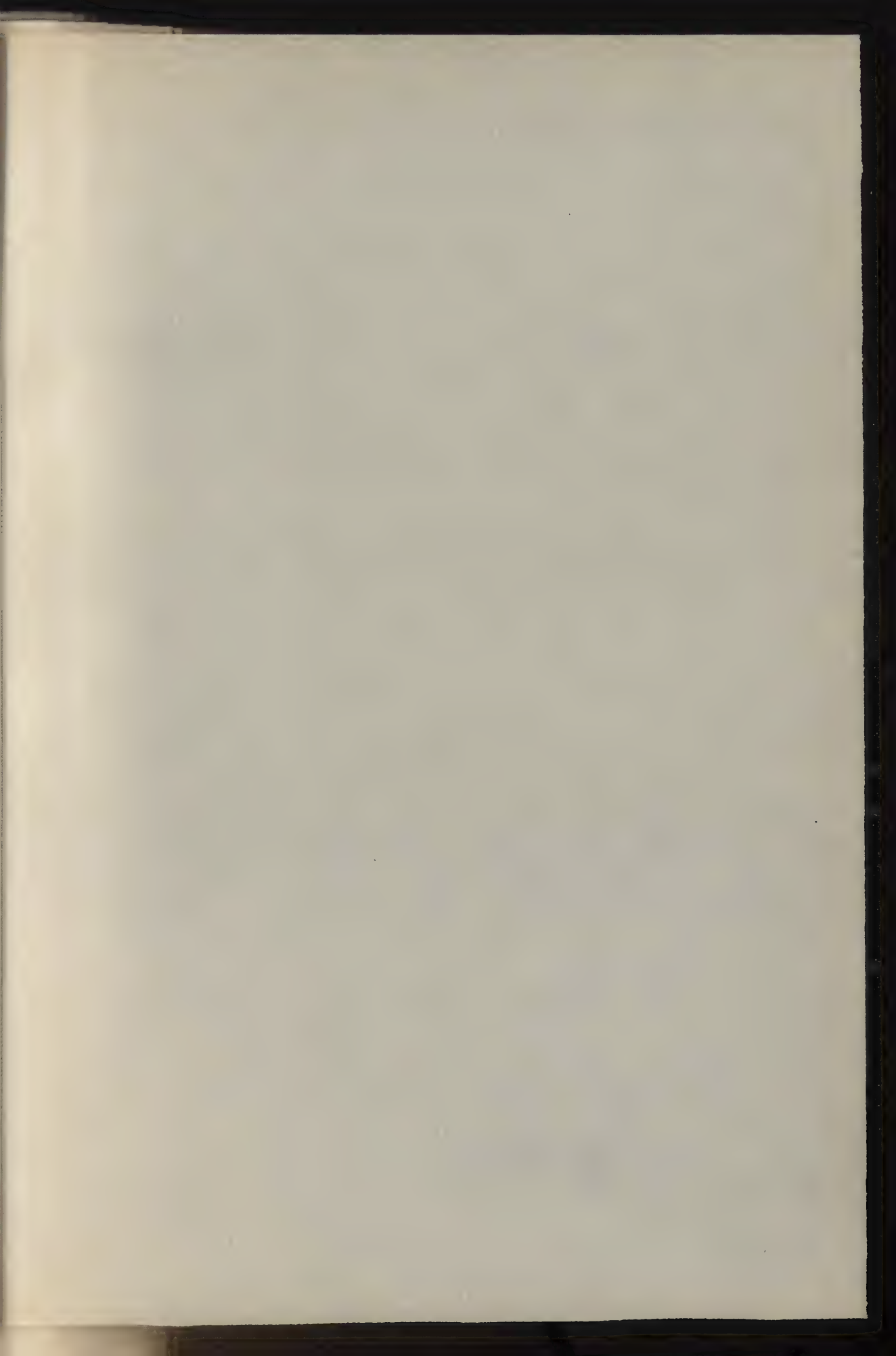


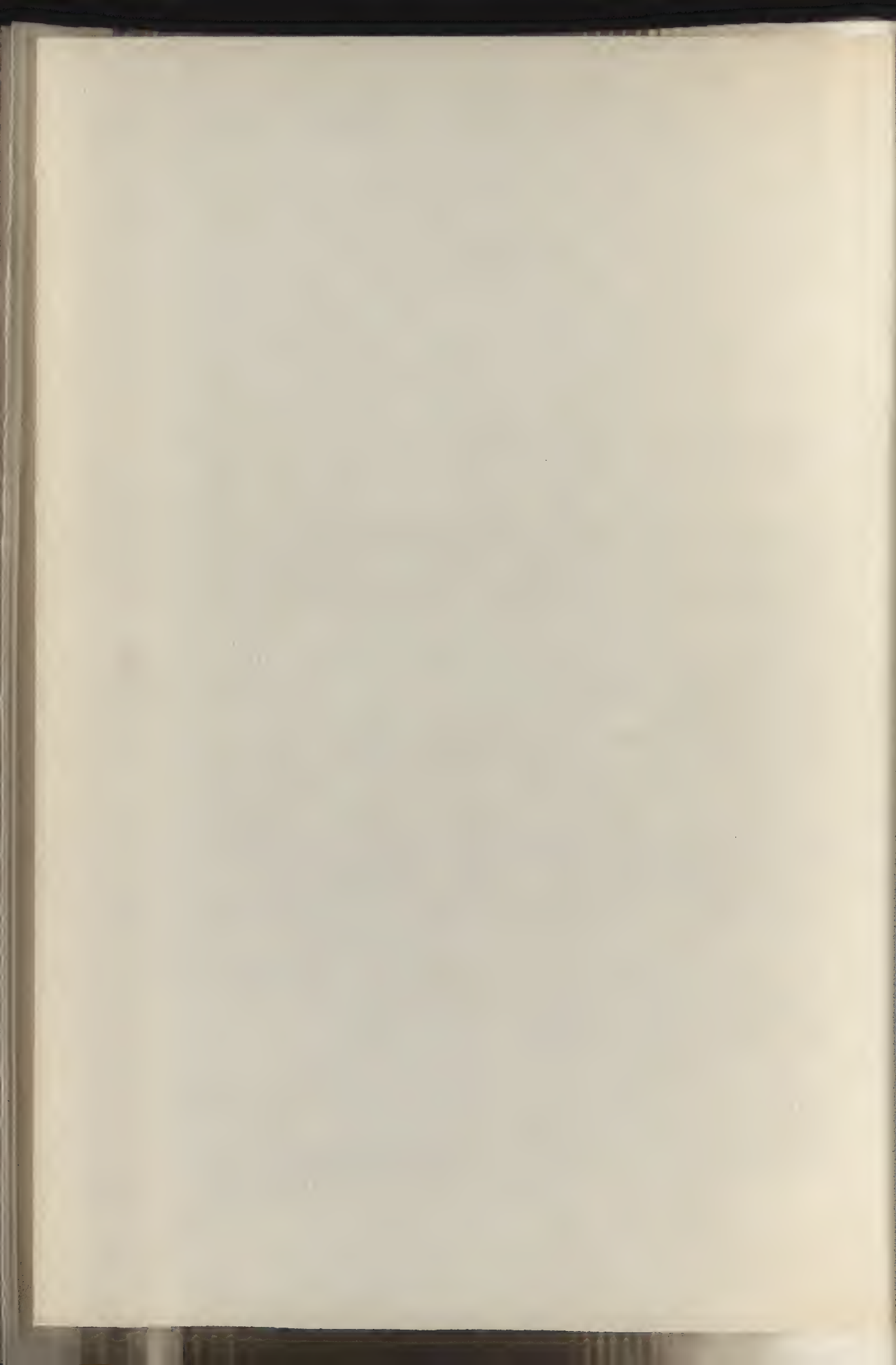
## CHAPTER IV

*Dürer and his dreams—The Knight, Death, and the Devil—St. Jerome—Melencolia—Maximilian—The Triumphal Arch—Maximilian's death—Journey to the Netherlands—Return to Nuremberg.*

THE time had now come for the production of Dürer's three most famous, most imaginative, and best engraved compositions. His genius had now attained its full maturity, his intellect and his idiosyncrasies were most fully developed. In the dedication of a translation of one of Lucian's Dialogues by Pirkheimer to Dürer's friend Ulrich Varnbuler, of whom Dürer has left so remarkable a woodcut portrait, Pirkheimer speaks of Dürer's dreamy and abstracted nature. He says that as in Lucian's dialogue Adimantes leaves his friends and wanders down to the Piræus, where he, while gazing on a richly laden merchant-ship, becomes absorbed in dreams of future richness, so did Dürer once behave in the company of friends at Pirkheimer's house. While they were all amusing themselves in watching a troop of mercenaries march by in armour with a band of music, Dürer sat in a kind of trance, and afterwards confided to Pirkheimer that he had seen, in his imagination, such beautiful things that he would have been one of the happiest of mortals if he had been able to achieve them. Dürer has himself recorded some of his dreams, and, as has been mentioned above, as he drew his studies of men and horses, the figures grew and composed themselves into some fantastic scene which probably existed but for a few fleeting moments in Dürer's brain. Looking through the whole history of German art, the student will find no instance in Germany of this dreamy poetic nature in any other artist. Power, learning, industry, truth, a true worship of the beautiful, a fervent spirit of religion, these are to be found often in the works of German artists. Beauty, that quality which not















only attracts the eye and stirs the heart, but also affects and informs the intellect, was ever a "Fata Morgana" to the art of Germany, perceived, ardently pursued, but always evading the ultimate capture. How true is Goethe's description of the Pursuit of Beauty by Faust ! The philosopher, learned and saturated with mediæval lore, has still one unappeased desire, the Beautiful. Religion, love, power, all fail to bring this within his reach. When, by supernatural means, he moves in a world of dreams and elemental mysteries, and when he has for once grasped Ideal Beauty in the person of Helen, what is the result ? Euphorion is born, child of Classic Beauty and Mediæval Romance:—

Blumenstreifige Gewande  
 Hat er würdig angethan  
 Quasten schwanken von den Armen, Binden flattern um der Busen,  
 In der Hand die goldne Leier, völlig wie ein kleiner Phöbus,  
 Tritt er wohlgemuth zur Kante, zu dem Ueberhang ; wir staunen,  
 Und die Eltern vor Entzücken werfen wechselnd sich ans Herz  
 Denn wie leuchtet's ihm zu Häupten ? Was erglänzt ist schwer zu sagen,  
 Ist es Goldschmuck, ist es Flamme übermächt'ger Geisteskraft.

But this child, the "future master of all beauty," beautiful and agile as he is, in a moment vanishes into the air, while the embroidered garment, mantle, and lyre fall masterless to the ground.

Dürer alone among German artists came near to a vision of the Beautiful, and where he was unable to express it himself he still retained the power of communicating his conception to other minds. He is a curious phenomenon in busy mercantile Nuremberg, this dreamy artist-student. His peculiar qualities were no doubt due to his Hungarian descent. From Hungary has come much of what is most human and sympathetic in German art and music. The best and purest music may be produced from Germany itself, but it is from Hungary that the music comes which sends a throb through the hearts of all who hear it. While Dürer was thus dreaming over the problems of knowledge and difficulties of life, there came a stern reality into his life in the shape of Death, who in 1514 knocked at the door of Dürer's house, where his poor old mother had lain sick and dying for a year, and, in Dürer's own words, "smote her two great strokes to the heart." Sorrowing for his mother's sickness, but intent on leading a pure and unperturbed life

among temptations and difficulties, ever absorbed in and discovering something new in his own work and studies, and yet at the same time sensible of the impossibility of achieving anything permanent in the way of knowledge or art within the limits of a single life, Dürer produced from his brain the three world-famous engravings, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, *St. Jerome in his Library*, and *Melencolia*, which contain the philosophy of a lifetime, and are more eloquent than a thousand volumes of printed knowledge.

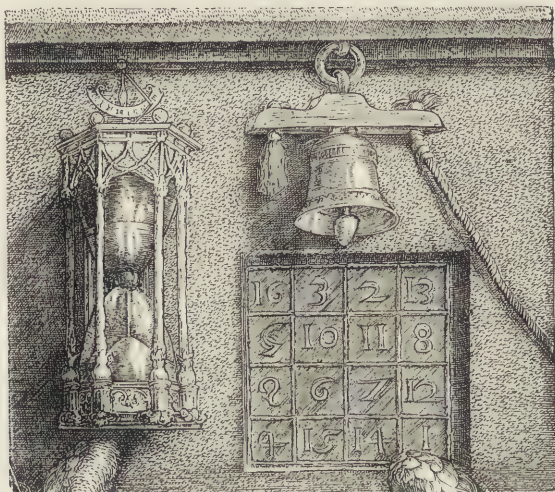
The panoply of war was familiar to all Germans of Dürer's date, especially since Maximilian had flooded Germany with his lanzknechts. War was ever stalking through the land with its cannons and *condottieri*. Dürer had already in 1498 made a drawing of a knight on horseback (now in the Albertina collection), clad, as he has written on the drawing, in the armour of the day. From his youth up he had studied the proportions of the horse as keenly as those of the human figure, as in *The Great Horse* and *The Little White Horse*, the *St. Eustace*, and other engravings. He had already used his drawing for the small engraving of *St. George on Horseback* in 1505. The type of the stern resolute *condottiere* may have been suggested to him by Verrocchio's statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni at Venice, and was embodied by him in the portraits of his two friends the Baumgärtner brothers in the altarpiece at Munich. Death also he had looked in the face from his boyhood as the omnipresent enemy of the human race, and he felt ever conscious of the demons of evil surrounding the path of life for every traveller thereon. Thus in 1513, the year of his sorrow, he combined these elements in his immortal conception of *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, which he himself described as *Der Ritter*. The engraving shows the Christian, clad in the armour of faith and courage, riding to his goal, conscious of, but undisturbed by, the menace of death or the horrible suggestions of the devil. In the words of an old German poem: —

Across my path though Hell should stride,  
Through Death and Devil I will ride.

The second of these three engravings, published in 1514, shows a happier temperament. St. Jerome, the type of the mediæval scholar, who by his translation of the Bible into Latin became one of the real fathers of Christianity, sits at his writing-desk in his library, as he does



in the earlier woodcut by Dürer in 1511. The room is a regular German interior, such as that of Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, and the warm morning sun streams through the windows, over the saint, and the floor, where the lion and a dog lie slumbering in its warmth. All is peace, happiness, and contentment, and simplicity and comfort are blended in the fittings of the chamber. A strong contrast to this is shown in the *Melencolia* of the same year. The blow had fallen, and his mother was no longer alive. In this engraving all is dark and gloomy. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," dreams Melancholy. "What use are wings, what



Portion of Dürer's "*Melencolia*."

worth the crown of bays, what avails it to build, to measure, to level, to weigh, to solve problems of mathematics, alchemy, or philosophy, when the only end is nothing? Night and eternal sleep is all that mankind has to look forward to in this life." The rainbow is the only note of hope in the composition, while the comet seems to denote the existence of another world beyond human comprehension.

In the *Melencolia* there can be no doubt that the so-called "magic square" refers directly to the death of his mother. His mother died on May 17, 1514. Now the figures on the square can be read as follows: the two figures in the opposite corners to each other,  $16 + 1$  and  $13 + 4$ ,

make 17, the day of the month ; so do the figures in the centre, read crossways,  $10 + 7$  and  $11 + 6$ , and also the middle figures at the sides, read across,  $5 + 12$  and  $8 + 9$ . The two middle figures in the top line,  $3 + 2$ , give 5, the month in question ; and the two middle figures in the bottom line give the year, 1514.<sup>1</sup> Above the square a bell tolls the fatal knell, and the sandglass timepiece hard by records no doubt the hour at which the sad event happened.

Dürer in his writings dwells so much upon the dominating influence of the Four Temperaments in life, that there is good ground for believing that these three engravings were part of a series intended to represent the Sanguine, Melancholic, Phlegmatic, and Choleric Temperaments. Dürer, however, makes no allusion to any such intention thereof. That there was a lighter side, however, to Dürer's life and thoughts is shown by the two little popular engravings of *The Bagpiper* and *The Dancing Peasants*, both published in 1514.

Meanwhile a new sphere of action had been opened to Dürer, fraught with hopes of riches and glory, but which turned out in reality to be the shoal on which Dürer's whole career was eventually wrecked. In February 1512 the Emperor Maximilian came to Nuremberg. Maximilian is one of the most curious and interesting figures of his time, in his way a personification of the Renaissance. Steeped in mediævalism and romance, the lusty vigour of his character led him to become one of the pioneers of a new age. His ambition was to excel in every walk of life. As sovereign, general, athlete, scholar, law-giver, churchman, man of letters, in everything he saw himself the first. He even aspired to the Papacy, as a fitting close to his career. When he was not careering over Europe in some of his innumerable wars, he was engaged in encouraging tournaments and pageants, or in patronising art and literature. The genial warmth of his encouragement made them grow apace. One thing, however, accompanied him during the whole of his career—namely, want of cash. “Why trouble yourself,” may have said this knight of the jocund countenance, “about money, when you have rich bankers like the Fuggers of Augsburg or the Imhoffs at Nuremberg, ready and willing to be bled?” So progressed Maximilian in a blaze of triumph, commanding this and commissioning that, and trusting to the fact of all

<sup>1</sup> See Anton Springer, *Albert Dürer*. Berlin, 1892.



reckonings being submerged in the deluge, which he knew must follow upon his removal from the scene.



*Maximilian, Emperor of Germany. From a woodcut portrait by A. Dürer (reduced).*

Struck by the achievements of Dürer in wood-engraving, Maximilian at once considered how the art could be turned to his own glorification.

He conceived in his mind a colossal woodcut picture, representing himself in a triumphal procession riding in a chariot towards a triumphal arch, on which all his achievements were depicted. He ordered Stabius, his professor of astronomy and mathematics, to confer with Dürer, and produce the literary part of these vast compositions. For two years Dürer worked on these designs for Maximilian, receiving no payment, being put off by Maximilian with an order to the Town Council at Nuremberg to exempt Dürer from taxation, an order to which the Council paid not the slightest attention. Ninety-two blocks did Dürer design for *The Triumphal Arch*, the biggest and in some ways the finest thing ever produced in engraving. Had this *Triumphal Arch* or *Gate of Honour* been the only engraved work of Dürer's which survived, it would still have won for him a place among the great artists of the world. The design is fantastic, but original. There are three openings in the arch—"The Gate of Honour and Might," "The Gate of Fame," "The Gate of Nobility." In the centre is the family tree of Maximilian, and on either side the principal historical events of his career and his achievements in the civil arts. It is nearly all drawn by Dürer from the descriptive designs of Joannes Stabius, but it seems that Hans Dürer and Hans Springinklee had some share in its composition. After its completion Dürer claimed his reward, the yearly pension of 100 florins promised by Maximilian. Maximilian acceded to this, by giving him a charge for this sum on the taxes of Nuremberg, though he did not scruple later on to assign all these taxes to the Elector of Saxony for some years. Dürer, however, had a truer friend in Frederick the Wise than in the jocund Emperor, so generous at other people's expense.

Many other designs did Dürer make for Maximilian, including twenty-four blocks for *The Triumph*, *The Triumphal Car* (not completed till after Maximilian's death), the patron saints of Austria, the ornamental borders to the famous *Book of Prayers*, the wonderfully minute little *Crucifixion* for Maximilian's sword-hilt, designs for a rich suit of armour, &c. Moreover, he drew on the wood for Stabius some of the latter's astronomical and geographical tables. When Maximilian presided at the Diet held at Augsburg in 1518, Albrecht Dürer, Caspar Nützel, and Lazarus Spengler were the commissioners sent by the town



of Nuremberg. There Dürer drew Maximilian's portrait from the life, "in his little room upstairs in the palace, in the year 1518, on the Monday after St. John the Baptist's Day." This drawing Dürer copied on wood, and afterwards, after the Emperor's death, inserted the block in an elaborate frame as a posthumous memorial. At Augsburg also during this Diet Dürer drew the portrait of the young Charles, Maximilian's grandson, already installed in the kingdom of Spain, but now for the first time invested with the imperial dignity. From this drawing a very rare woodcut was made, known chiefly by the numerous copies made of it at Augsburg by Jost de Negker and others.

Thus did Dürer's art grow and wax fruitful in the sun of the imperial favour, but his difficulties in extracting any remuneration from the Emperor are shown in the following letter, written about 1515 : "Dear Herr Kress,—The first thing I have to ask you is to find out from Herr Stabius whether he has done anything in my business with his Imperial Majesty, and how it stands. Let me know this in the next letter which you write to my Lords. Should it happen that Herr Stabius has made no move in the matter, finding that the attainment of my ends was too hard for him, in that case I beg you, as my gracious master, to make such representations to his Imperial Majesty as Caspar Nützel explained to you, and as I asked you. Point out in particular to his Imperial Majesty that I have served his Majesty for three years, spending my own money in so doing, and if I had not been diligent the ornamental work would have been nowise so successfully finished. I therefore pray his Imperial Majesty to recompense me with the 100 florins—all which you know well how to do. You must know also that I made many other drawings for his Majesty besides *The Triumph*. If, however, you find that Stabius has accomplished anything for me, there is no need for you to take any trouble about me this time." If payment was slow in coming, it seemed certain to arrive in due time, when on January 12, 1519, an incautious meal of melon suddenly put an end to the jocund Maximilian's wars, feastings, tournaments, artistic schemes—to everything except his debts.

Dürer had just obtained from the Emperor a grant of 200 florins, chargeable on the Town Council of Nuremberg, in addition to his annual pension of 100 florins. This the Council declined to pay without

ratification. Hearing, therefore, that the new Emperor, the young Charles V., Maximilian's grandson, was going to the Netherlands to assume the sovereignty inherited from his mother, and was also going to be crowned as Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle, Dürer made up his mind to go in person and try and obtain from the Emperor himself a ratification of Maximilian's grant. Charles V. (already King of Spain) was elected Emperor at Frankfurt on June 28, 1519, and the Nuremberg Council determined to strike a medal to commemorate the occasion. Dürer sent in a sketch from which the medals were eventually made.

On July 12, 1520, Albrecht Dürer, with his wife Agnes and her maid



*The Crucifixion. From an engraving by A. Dürer, executed for the sword-belt of the Emperor Maximilian.*

Susanna, left Nuremberg and set forth on their journey to the Netherlands. Their departure may have been accelerated by a serious outbreak of the plague at Nuremberg, which may also have been the cause of Dürer being accompanied by his wife and maid, instead of journeying alone, as on his last visit to Venice. The party can be followed as they went by Erlangen, Baiersdorf, and Forchheim to Bamberg, where they were entertained by the Bishop; thence by degrees to Würzburg. From thence the journey was by Lohr and Aschaffenburg to Frankfurt along the valley

of the Main, much the same route on which modern pilgrims are whirled by the railroad from their Mecca at Bayreuth. At Frankfurt they encountered Jakob Heller, Dürer's former patron and correspondent. Thence to Mayence, where they took passage on the Rhine on a boat bound for Cologne. Ten days it had taken them to get from Nuremberg to the Rhine, and the best part of three more before they arrived at Cologne. Here Dürer met his cousin Niklas the Hungarian, son of his father's brother Ladislas. They were quickly off from Cologne on the road to Antwerp, which city they reached on Thursday, August 2. Great was the honour paid to Dürer by the painters at Antwerp. They entertained him, his wife, and also the maid Susanna, at dinner in the hall of their guild, all their wives being present. Among other persons, Dürer met at Antwerp Quentin Matsys, Joachim Patenir,



Erasmus, Nicolas Kratzer (Henry VIII.'s astronomer, so well known from his portrait by Holbein), and Peter Aegidius, the friend and correspondent of Sir Thomas More. He witnessed the Ommegang with the procession of all the guilds at the Feast of the Assumption. On August 26 Dürer left Antwerp, leaving his wife there, and travelled by Mechlin to Brussels, where he was presented to the Regent Margaret. Here at Brussels Dürer met Bernard van Orley, the painter, and drew his portrait, and also was much thrown with Erasmus. Dürer returned to Antwerp on September 3. Here he received the news of Raphael's death on April 6 of the same year, from the mouth of one of Raphael's pupils, Tommaso Vincidore of Bologna, who drew a portrait of Dürer, which has been engraved. On October 4 Dürer's party left Antwerp to go to Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), where the new Emperor was going to be crowned in the cathedral of Charlemagne, and where Dürer hoped to get an audience of the Emperor himself. They attended the coronation on October 23, and on the 26th paid a second visit to his cousin at Cologne, where they stayed till November 14, when they started on their return journey to Antwerp. This time they accomplished the journey by the Rhine boat, passing Düsseldorf, Nijmegen, and Hertogenbosch, and reaching Antwerp on November 22. Here Dürer heard that a great whale had been stranded at Zierikzee on the coast of Holland, and he determined to try and get a sight of it. So on December 3 he started on horseback with his wife for Bergen-op-Zoom, and thence took boat for Arnemuyden, where Dürer was nearly shipwrecked while landing, and afterwards for Middelburg. On December 9 they started for Zierikzee, but the sea had washed away the whale before they got there, so back they came to Bergen, and home to Antwerp on December 14. Dürer now remained nearly four months at Antwerp, till April 6, when he paid a five days' visit to Bruges and Ghent. He then remained at Antwerp, with the exception of a short visit to the Lady Margaret at Mechlin, till July 3, when he started on his homeward journey by Brussels and Cologne. At Mechlin Dürer came across traces of his old friend Jacopo dei Barbari. "On Friday," he writes, "Lady Margaret showed me all her beautiful things; amongst them I saw about forty small oil pictures, the like of which for precision and excellence I have never beheld. There also I saw good works by Jan [van Mabuse] and Jakob Walch [Barbari]. I asked

my Lady for Jakob's little book, but she said she had already promised it to her painter [Bernard van Orley]." About this time Dürer records a meeting of the greatest interest. "Master Lukas, who engraves on copper, asked me as his guest. He is a little man, born at Leyden in Holland; he was at Antwerp;" and again, "I have drawn with the metal point the portrait of Master Lukas van Leyden."

Lucas van Leyden was Dürer's greatest contemporary rival in engraving north of the Alps. He was a little man with a little mind, but a great artist. His precocity was most remarkable, and his productive energy in painting and engraving quickly exhausted a weak constitution and brought him to an early grave. His engravings are very lightly executed and gave but few good impressions, so that really fine impressions of Lucas's engravings are rarer than those of Dürer's. He lacked Dürer's precision in drawing, and was totally deficient in Dürer's sentiment and imagination. He had however a breadth of design and a mastery of aerial perspective which is often lacking in Dürer's work. Dürer evidently appreciated his work, for he writes that he gave eight florins' worth of his own prints for a whole set of Lucas's engravings. It is obvious that Lucas knew Dürer's work, and worked in direct rivalry of it, as he did in his later days of Marcantonio.

Valuable information can be gleaned from Dürer's journal concerning his own prints and what he sold or gave to his friends. It appears from these entries that he divided his engravings roughly into three classes: whole-sheets, half-sheets, and quarter-sheets—for example, the *St. Eustace*, the *St. Anthony*, and the quite small prints. He took with him his most recently published engravings, his "four new pieces" being the two new *Marys* of 1520, *The Virgin Crowned by an Angel*, and *The Virgin with the Infant in Swaddling Clothes*, the *St. Anthony* (the famous little plate of 1519, with the wondrous view of Nuremberg in the background), and the *New Peasants* (a group also dated 1519). He most frequently gives or sells the "Three Large Books," i.e. *The Apocalypse*, *The Life of Mary*, and *The Great Passion*, or *The Little Passion*, and *The Passion* engraved on copper. He also mentions the *Adam and Eve*, the *St. Jerome in a Cell*, *Melencolia*, *The Knight*, *St. Eustace*, *Nemesis*, the *Meerwunder*, and the *Hercules*, the *Veronica*, *The Nativity* (or *Christmas*), and *The Cross*. In one place he alludes to what he calls his



“bad woodcuts,” and he gives Augustin Lombard “the two parts of the *Imagines Cæli*, and to Master Dietrich the painter, the *Six Knots*.” On Monday after Michaelmas 1520, he writes, “I gave Thomas of Bologna a whole set of prints to send for me to Rome to another painter, who should send me Raphael’s work in return.” On July 3 he says, “I gave the King of Denmark the best of all my prints; they are worth five florins.” This unrivalled selection is still at Copenhagen. What would it be worth now? Shortly after attending the coronation of Charles V.



*St. Anthony. From an engraving by A. Dürer.*

he succeeded in accomplishing the object of his journey. “My confirmation,” he writes, “from the Emperor came to my Lords of Nuremberg for me on Monday after Martinmas in the year 1520, after great trouble and labour.” On July 12, 1521, exactly a year after their departure from Nuremberg, Dürer and his wife started for Brussels on their journey home. As at Venice, the Town Council of Antwerp offered him a residence, a salary, and immunity from taxation, if he would remain there; but Dürer’s love of his home proved invincible.

## CHAPTER V

*Result of journey—Ill health—Later engravings—Religious views—Luther—Waning powers—Engraved portraits—Melanchthon—The Four Temperaments—Literary works—Illness and death—Dürer's ideas of beauty—His importance as a black-and-white artist.*

ALTHOUGH Dürer succeeded in the chief object of his journey, he was not at all contented with the profits got by the sale of his own wares. "The Lady Margaret especially," he writes, "gave me nothing for what I had presented to her or made for her." Ill-health, too, he brought home with him to Nuremberg. During his expedition to Zeeland he had been attacked by an extraordinary sickness which he could never quite shake off. After his return to Antwerp he was in April seized with great weakness, nausea, and headache, and had to have resort to medical advice. This illness seems to have seriously impaired not only his physical health but his creative faculties, and seems to have been intermittent. When, however, he returned to Nuremberg and to his house by the Thiergärtner Thor, he was treated with increased respect by his fellow-citizens. Hitherto the Councillors of Nuremberg had not shown themselves of a very liberal or generous disposition. All the commissions which Dürer had as yet received were from princes or private individuals. Now in 1521 the Council decreed that the Rathhaus at Nuremberg should have its large hall painted after designs by Dürer, those chosen being the *Calumny of Apelles* and *The Triumphal Car of Maximilian*, as it is seen in the great woodcut of 1522. Dürer's industry as an engraver now flagged. Two unimportant engravings of *St. Christopher* were done soon after his return. He seems to have contemplated another Passion series on wood in an oblong shape, completing some of the drawings and one woodcut, *The Last Supper*, dated 1523. He also seems to have intended a series of the Apostles, which he commenced in



1514 with *St. Thomas* and *St. Paul*, to which he now added [*St. Bartholomew* and *St. Simon* in 1523, and later on, in 1526, *St. Philip*.



*Book-plate of Willibald Pirckheimer. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.*

He frequently drew coats-of-arms, book-plates (*ex libris*), or sometimes title-pages for his friends ; but his creative powers seem to have lapsed.

As Dürer advanced in life he became more and more absorbed in the progress of the Lutheran doctrines. He showed his hatred of sacerdotalism and lay oppression as far back as *The Apocalypse*, but he gradually began to take a deeper personal interest in the doings and writings of Luther, Melanchthon, and Ulrich Zwinglius. Unfailing faith in the benevolence and mercy of God seems to have been the kernel of Dürer's religious views, as they are of many an upright and industrious German household at the present day. After his father's death in 1502, Dürer wrote to a friend asking for their prayers on behalf of his father's soul, and says that it is not possible for one who has lived well to depart ill from this world, for God is full of compassion. Again he says, in defence of his art, "that what God had formed is good, whatever wrong use men may make of it." Now that sickness had struck a warning note in his life, his mind turned to the contemplation of another world. The three great engravings, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, *Melencolia*, and *St. Jerome*, were the results of his brooding over the trials and the shortness of life. A true Humanist, Dürer carried out the old Latin adage—

Homo sum ; nihil a me alienum puto,

and trusted implicitly that by leading an upright and industrious life he would be rewarded by God in a future life. Thus the simple, downright honesty of Luther was in easy consonance with his own thoughts. To Dürer, as well as to Luther, one page of the sacred book itself was worth all the learning of the Fathers, one simple good action to another fellow-creature would be more efficient to secure future bliss than a thousand indulgences bought by gold and the repeating of venal supplications.

It was in Antwerp that Dürer received the news of Luther's abduction near Eisenach, though he naturally was unaware that it was done by Luther's friends. Dürer felt that he was gone from them altogether, and writes a lament full of genuine pathos and sorrow. "All men," he writes in his journal, "who read Martin Luther's books can see how clear and lucid is his doctrine, because he sets forth the Holy Gospel. For this reason his books ought to be greatly revered and not burnt, unless indeed his enemies, who are always fighting against the truth, and would make men into gods, were also thrown into the fire, together with their opinions, and then a new edition of Luther scrolls prepared. Oh God,



if Luther be dead, who will henceforth expound to us the Holy Gospel with such clearness? What, oh God, might he not still have written for us in ten or twenty years!" Writing in 1520 to Georg Spalatin, chaplain to his former patron Frederick the Wise of Saxony, Dürer says: "And pray God that I may come to Doctor Martin Luther, for I will diligently draw his portrait and engrave it on copper for a long memorial of the Christ-like man who has helped me out of such great sorrows; and I beg your Honour, when Doctor Martin composes anything new in German, to send it to me at my expense."

Soon after Dürer's return from the Netherlands, Nuremberg was convulsed by religious troubles. Although the town was ready to embrace the reformed doctrines, it was in a peaceful and conservative spirit. The outbreak, however, of the Peasants' War brought great troubles into the town, for many of the younger and more turbulent spirits adopted the extreme doctrines of Münzer, and raised a tumult against the civil authority. In vain did Dürer and his friends lament these religious convulsions. Dürer's own best wood-engraver, Hieronymus Andreae, was not only one of the ringleaders, but was actually thrown into prison, and three of his chief pupils and assistants in copperplate-engraving, Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham and Georg Pencz, were expelled from the town.

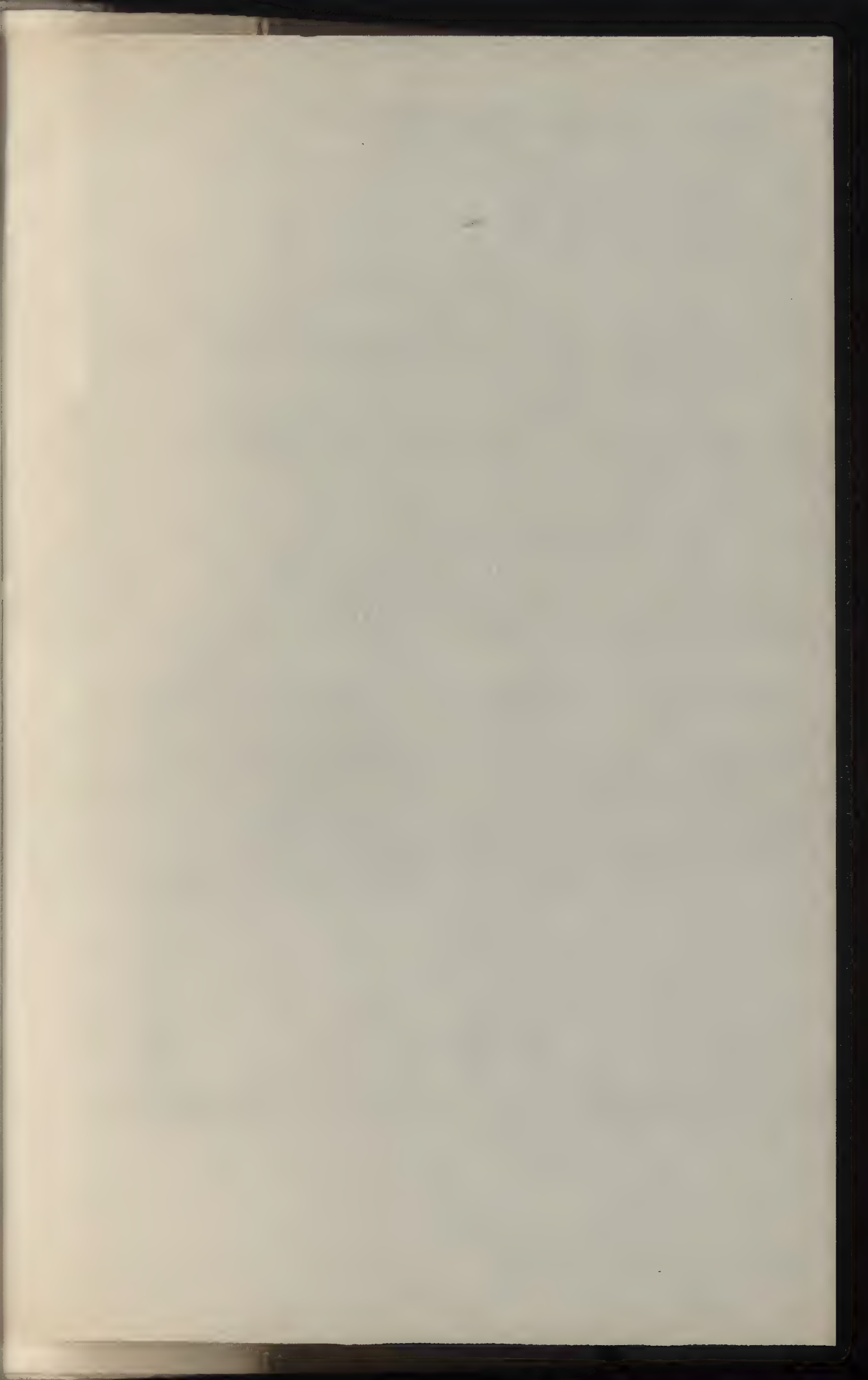
Ill-health, religious troubles, and the waning of his productive energy seem to have had a rather embittering effect on Dürer's nature.

Although he seems never to have been in want of money, he now began to show himself to be a true Nuremberger in the care which he took of his affairs, and he was egged on no doubt by his thrifty and unromantic wife Agnes. In 1524 he wrote a letter to the Town Council of Nuremberg, in which he alludes sarcastically to the little encouragement given him by his fellow-citizens. "During the thirty years I have stayed at home, I have not received from people in this town work worth 500 florins—and not a fifth part of that has been profit." He then says that he has saved 1,000 florins, which he asked them to receive for him, and to pay to him and his wife five per cent. interest. This the Town Council agreed to do, although after his death they reduced the rate of payment to his wife to four per cent.

Feeling his imaginative powers failing him, Dürer occupied his last

years in making portraits in painting as well as on wood and on copper. When in Augsburg in 1518, he had met and made acquaintance with the art-loving and influential Albrecht of Brandenburg, Cardinal Archbishop of Mayence, and had drawn his portrait more than once. One of these drawings he had engraved in 1519 as a frontispiece to the *Heilthumsbuch*, published at Halle in 1520. He now engraved another portrait of the Cardinal, which he sent with 500 impressions. In a letter to the Cardinal, dated September 4, 1523, he inquires anxiously after this plate, sent, as he says, before he was ill that year. It is to be hoped that the good Cardinal did not, like Maximilian, leave his *protégé* unpaid. In 1524 Melanchthon came to Nuremberg and was the guest of Pirkheimer, in whose house Dürer frequently met him. Many seem to have been the discussions between the three friends—the artist, the reformer, and the gouty scholar. Melanchthon said of Dürer that in him the artistic element, prominent as it was, was by no means the most important. The last engravings from Dürer's hand were portraits of his friends among the supporters of the reformed religion. In 1524 he published that of his old patron Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, now grown old and corpulent, and very different from the strong fiery man depicted by Dürer in earlier years in the portrait now at Berlin. In the same year he published the portrait of his friend Pirkheimer, a marvel of engraving and a complete rendering of his features, in which one can read the impetuous and voluminous scholar and writer, the man fond of life, love, and feasting, and the querulous victim to gout and other ailments of advancing years. It has been shown how eagerly Dürer desired to engrave Luther's portrait. In 1526 he engraved that of Melanchthon, and also that of Erasmus, done from one of the drawings made by Dürer in the Netherlands. The last two are by no means the most satisfactory of Dürer's portraits, though as engravings they quite hold their own. The portrait of Erasmus is avowedly done from memory and from a drawing of a few years back. The world is so much accustomed to see Erasmus as Holbein painted him in his old age, that Dürer's portrait comes rather as a surprise, or even as a shock. Erasmus himself, on viewing the portrait, dismissed it with a sarcasm, and was evidently far from being flattered by it, although he acknowledged that he himself had altered much during the intervening years. Others among Dürer's friends and patrons,







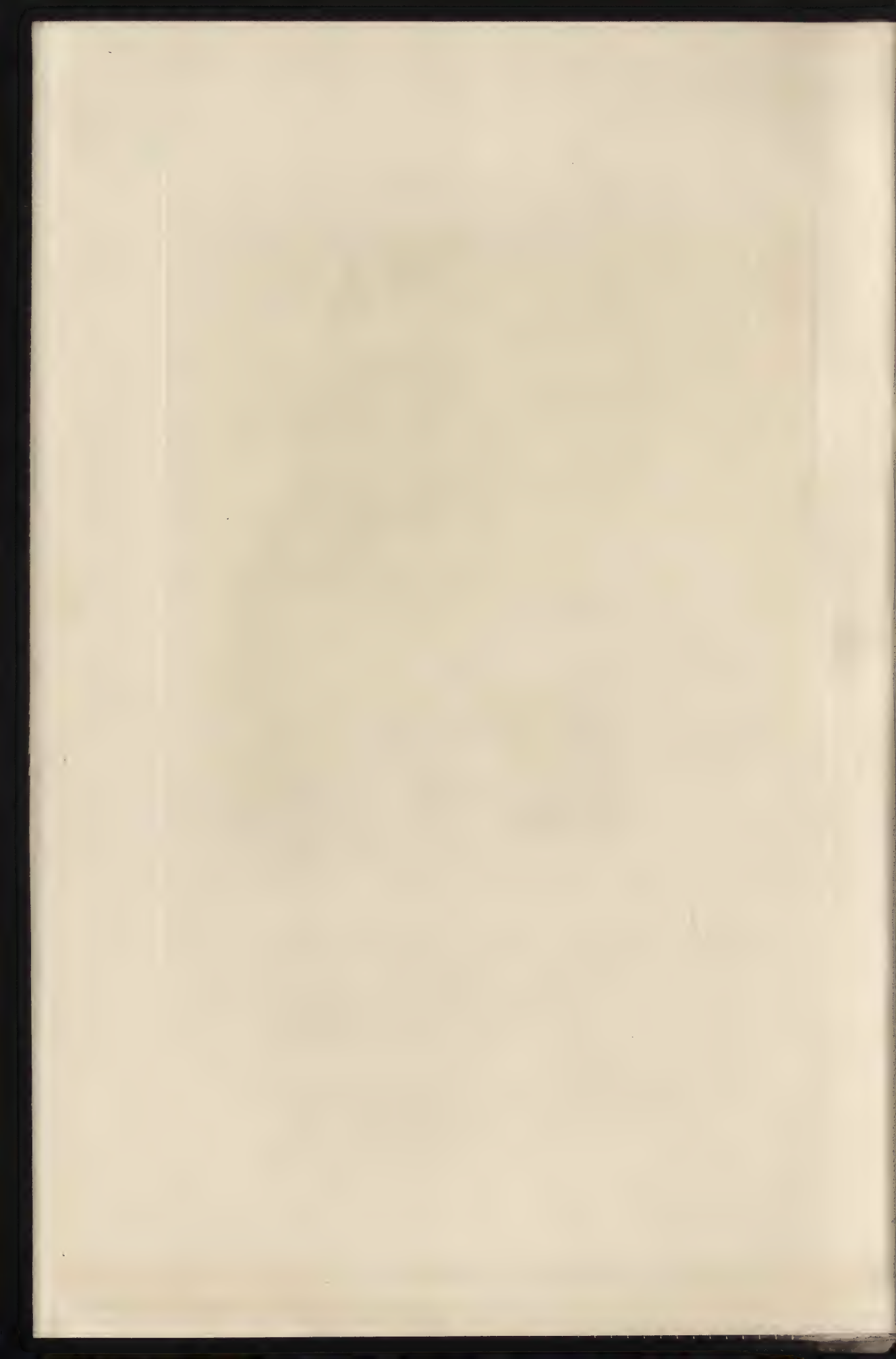




BILIBALDI · PIRKEYMHERI · EFFIGIES  
· AETATIS · SVAE · ANNO · L · III ·  
VIVITVR · INGENIO · CAETERA · MORTIS ·  
· ERVNT ·

M · D · XX · IV ·







whom he seems to have intended to immortalise on copper, were Eobanus Hesse, of whom a woodcut exists from a drawing by Dürer, Christian



*Portrait of Albrecht Dürer. From a woodcut published after his death (reduced).*

of Denmark, &c., but his work as a copperplate-engraver was now at an end.

Once more did painting monopolise his attention. He conceived the idea of four great figures, representing his favourite subject of the Four Temperaments, as represented by the Apostles Peter, John, Paul, and Mark. These he painted on two great upright panels, and presented to the Town Council of Nuremberg, though they have since found their way to Munich.

When Dürer's creative powers as an artist began to fail him, he set to work to put in order the numerous notes and studies he had made throughout his life on Measurement and Proportion. Among the scraps of manuscript which have been preserved is the following scheme for a *magnum opus* on the theory and practice of art :—

Ten things are contained in the little book :—

The first, the proportions of a young child.

The second, proportions of a grown man.

The third, proportions of a woman.

The fourth, proportions of a horse.

The fifth, something about architecture.

The sixth, about an apparatus through which it can be shown that all things may be traced.

The seventh, about light and shade.

The eighth, about colours ; how to paint like nature.

The ninth, about the composition of a picture.

The tenth, about free painting, which alone is made without any help from the understanding.

The result of his labours was that in 1525 he published a kind of preliminary work entitled *The Teaching of Measurements by Rule and Compass in Lines, Planes, and Solids*, compiled by Albrecht Dürer, and printed with illustrations for the use of all lovers of art, in the year 1525.<sup>1</sup> This was a work on geometry, and Dürer paid special attention to the illustrations, since, as he says in the text, "anything which you see is more credible than what you hear, and when both seen and heard it is easier to remember." He then took in hand the four books on *Human*

<sup>1</sup> Underweysung der Messung mit dem zirckel uñ richtscheyt in Linien ebenen unnd gantzen corporen durch Albrecht Dürer zusammen getzoge und zu Nutz alle kunstliebhabenden mit zugehörigen figuren in truck gebracht im Jar m̃dxxv.



*Proportions*, but in the meantime put forth in 1527 a treatise on *The Art of Fortification*.<sup>1</sup> He had only completed for the press one out of the four volumes of *Human Proportions* at the time of his death, but the work was seen through the press and completed by Pirkheimer in 1528.<sup>2</sup> His studies on the proportions of a horse remained incomplete and unpublished, and were eventually stolen or appropriated by Hieronymus Andreae and Hans Sebald Beham, who would have published them for their own profit and credit, had not Dürer's widow obtained an injunction against them from the Town Council. Another work, intended to be called *A Banquet (or Dish) for Young Painters*, remains only in fragments. This work would seem however to have been completed, for Camerarius, in the eulogy of Dürer from which quotations have already been made, says that "if I find that my industry and devotion in this matter meet with my readers' approval, I shall be encouraged to translate into Latin the rest of Albrecht's treatise on painting, a work at once more finished and more laborious than the present. Moreover, his writings on other subjects will also be looked for, his Geometrics and Teichismatics, in which he explained the fortification of towns according to the system of the present day. These however appear to be all the subjects on which he wrote books. As to the promise which I hear certain persons are making, in conversation or in writing, to publish a book by Dürer on the symmetry of the parts of the horse, I cannot but wonder from what source they will obtain after his death what he never completed during his life. Although I am well aware that Albrecht had begun to investigate the law of truth in this matter too, and had made a certain number of measurements, I also know that he lost all he had done through the treachery of certain persons, by whose means it came about that the author's notes were stolen, so that he never cared to begin the work afresh. He had a suspicion, or rather a certainty, as to the source whence came the drones who had invaded his store, but the great man preferred to hide his knowledge to his own loss and pain rather than to lose sight of generosity

<sup>1</sup> Etliche underricht zu befestigung der Stett Schloss und flecken. . . . Gedrückt zu Nürenberg nach der Geburt Christi Anno mcccccxvii in dem Monat October.

<sup>2</sup> Hjerin sind begriffen vier bücher von menschlicher Proportion durch Albrechten Dürer von Nürenberg erfunden und beschriben zu nutz allen denen, so zu diser kunst lieb tragen, MDXXVIIIJ.

and kindness in the pursuit of his enemies. We shall not therefore suffer anything that may appear to be attributed to Albrecht's authorship, unworthy as it must evidently be of so great an artist."

Dürer's labours were terminated rather suddenly by his death, which occurred in Passion Week, on April 6, 1528. A woodcut portrait of him published after his death shows the extent to which he had been reduced by the ravages of disease. The face is worn and haggard, and the head has been shorn of those golden curls which were the glory of Dürer's portraits, and made him famous among his fellow-citizens. It is usually supposed that Dürer died of an inflammation of the spleen, brought on by the malarious fever which he incurred during his visit to Zeeland. A drawing at Bremen seems to support this, in which he has drawn himself pointing to a large yellow spot near the left groin, and inscribed "Where the yellow spot is to which my finger points, there it is that I feel pain." It has been suggested, however, to the present writer that the recorded symptoms of Dürer's illness point rather to the continuous presence of renal disease, and that he suffered for many years from the presence of a calculus or calculi in the left kidney. As far back as the year 1503 Dürer had been attacked by illness, during which he suffered great pain, as is shown by a drawing of Christ in agony as *The Man of Sorrows*, which is inscribed by Dürer, "This I drew during my sickness," and is evidently a record of his own suffering. The journey to the Netherlands, with its constant change of diet and mode of travelling, its feasting and wine-drinkings, and, finally, the long hurried ride and expedition by boat with the escape from shipwreck during the journey to Zeeland, would all have aggravated the existing ailment, and rendered him an easy victim to the malaria of the marshy coast. The fever, nausea, and headache from which Dürer subsequently suffered are all usual symptoms of the presence of such a disorder, and the sudden and peaceful passing away of a patient is, according to Dr. Norman Moore, a frequent occurrence in such cases. Many were the lamentations over his death. Those of Pirkheimer were loud and pathetic. Eobanus Hesse, one of the friends whose portraits Dürer drew, wrote an elegy on his death, which he sent to Luther, who replied in the touching words, that "Christ had taken him away in good time from those stormy days, which were destined to become more stormy still." Melanchthon added his voice to the chorus of



mourning. Erasmus alone was rather chilly in his reception of the news : perhaps he had not forgiven Dürer for the unflattering portrait mentioned before. Dürer was laid in the burying-place of the Frey family in the cemetery of St. John outside Nuremberg, where at a later date a monument was erected to mark the spot where his body had been laid. His widow and his chief assistant and wood-engraver, Hieronymus Andreae, carried on the trade in his engravings for several years.

Hieronymus, as has been stated before, was concerned in the piratical abstraction of Dürer's notes on the proportion of the horse. It was probably at his advice, or under his direction, that a great number of woodcuts were published after Dürer's death bearing his well-known monogram, and many of them, no doubt, from drawings actually made by Dürer himself. In this branch of engraving it is sometimes difficult to separate the woodcuts published during Dürer's lifetime and under his superintendence from those furnished up by Hieronymus in the years immediately following Dürer's death. Many of those by Hans Schäußelein have been included among Dürer's works at a time when the tendency to pile on to the name of a great artist any work which could be said in the slightest degree to resemble his was as great as the present tendency among critics to eliminate any work which may seem to them of inferior value or inadequate execution in proportion to the estimate in which they hold the artist in question.

What is beauty ? This was the question which Dürer asked himself daily throughout his life, and to which he could never find a satisfactory answer. "Utility is an element of Beauty," he says, "therefore what is useless in man is not beautiful. To judge of Beauty requires reflection. The standard of Beauty should, in my opinion, be like the standard of what is good." Such are some of Dürer's scattered thoughts upon the subject. His final opinion was that no man on earth can positively affirm what the perfection of human beauty is. No one but God knows that, and he to whom God may reveal it. In truth, and in truth alone, lies the secret of what constitutes beauty and perfection of shape in the human form. Truth, therefore, in Dürer's opinion is the nearest equivalent to beauty, and truth can only be acquired by close intellectual study with careful and accurate observation of nature. The æsthetic mind of the nineteenth century may be repelled by some of Dürer's most truthful

creations, especially in his delineations of the nude female figure. Dürer, however, went to nature for his studies of truth, and rejected all search of ideal beauty, feeling, no doubt, that it would be as futile and unsatisfying as that of Faust. Hence all his exquisite studies of natural objects. A stag-beetle, a hare, a plant of celandine, a dead jay, a marble quarry, a village nestling by a stream—to him are all as much imbued with beauty as the human form and countenance. Dreaming of beautiful things which he could not achieve, he depicted exactly what he did see in his waking hours; combining the somewhat *farouche* veracity of a Rembrandt with the imagination of a Watts and the minute accuracy of an Isaac Oliver.

As has been mentioned before, Dürer was a devoted student of natural history, especially of any object new or strange to him. A good instance of this is the well-known woodcut of a rhinoceros, done in 1515 from a drawing made by Dürer from the description sent him by a friend from Lisbon, where in 1513 a live rhinoceros had been brought from India. The original drawing of which this woodcut was made is in the British Museum, together with a similar drawing of a walrus, made also from description. It will be remembered that it was to try and see a whale that Dürer made his hurried and, as it proved, fatal journey into Zeeland.

It is as a black-and-white artist that Dürer has his chief claim on the reverence of posterity. He was the first great artist in this noble art, in which he was to be followed by Rembrandt, Hollar, Ostade, Meryon, Whistler, Haden, and a host of others. For the first time in history art was, in spite of the abnegation of colour, placed within the grasp and the intelligence of the people. Schongauer had led the way with his engravings; but it was Dürer, with his great woodcuts, who spoke and taught a new popular language. Erasmus writes of Dürer's woodcuts as follows: "Apelles, it is true, made use of few and unobtrusive colours; while Dürer, admirable as he is too in other respects, what can he not express with one single colour—that is to say, with black lines? He can give the effect of light and shade, brightness, foreground and background. Moreover, he reproduces not merely the natural look of a thing, but also observes the laws of perfect symmetry and harmony with regard to the position of it. He can also transfer, by enchantment, so to say, upon the canvas things which it seems not





ISIS  
RHINOCERVS  
TA

*A Rhinoceros. From a woodcut by A. Dürer (reduced).*



possible to represent, such as fire, sunbeams, storms, lightning, and mist ; he can portray every passion, show us the whole soul of man shining



*The Virgin crowned by two Angels. Engraving by A Dürer*

through his outward form, nay, even make us hear his very speech. All this he brings so happily before the eye with those black lines that the picture would lose by being clothed in colour. Is it not more worth



admiration to achieve without the winning charm of colour what Apelles only realised with its assistance ? ”

In this short study of Albrecht Dürer's life and work it has not been possible to do more than recount the more salient events of his life, and note the development and importance of his work as an engraver. His countless drawings, executed in every size and method, must be passed over with the remark that it is in them that Dürer's chief excellence as an artist is to be found, and that a prolonged study of such collections as those in the print rooms at the British Museum and at Berlin, or in the Albertina collection at Vienna, cannot fail to instruct and inform the mind of any student, lay or professional. Of his numerous designs for ornament more cannot be said here than that they proved the foundation of a school at Nuremberg, it being the branch of engraving in which Dürer's pupils and successors, the little masters, particularly excelled. All the works of carving or sculpture which have been attributed to Dürer may be considered as doubtful ; the once famous hone-stone carving of *The Birth of St. John the Baptist* being now known to be the work of a later Nuremberg artist. As a painter Dürer's works rank high, but not in the first class ; as an engraver he is easily the first of his age, though some may think him to have been excelled in mere technical skill by Schongauer or Aldegrever ; as a draughtsman he remains unrivalled for precision, dexterity, and variety ; as a thinker he is a worthy representative of the age of Luther and Erasmus.

But it is not only as a mere creative artist that Dürer attained his eminence. He was one of the great pioneers of art. Before him, little or nothing had been done north of the Alps to make art a factor in popular life. There is probably no branch of the fine arts which has not been affected in some way or another by the fact of Dürer's existence. Of how many artists can it be said that they left an impress on the whole subsequent history of art, and that they remain beacon lights or milestones by which the course of true art can be followed with the certainty of arriving at some definite conclusion ? Giotto, Luca Signorelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, Titian, Velazquez, Turner, Rembrandt, it is among these names that that of Dürer will rank for ever in the history of the world.

The minds of those who study Dürer's work should be open and

unbiased. In that case there cannot but be conveyed to them the lesson which truth, purity, and sincerity of purpose are ever bound to teach. In the words of Camerarius, "There is nothing foul, nothing disgraceful in his work; the thoughts of his pure mind shunned all such things"; and again, "if there be anything in this man that at all resembled a fault, it was only his incessant diligence and the frequently unjust severity of his own self-criticism."

In bringing this monograph to a conclusion, the words may be quoted which Dürer wrote in 1512 among the many drafts for his book on proportion: "In this matter I will, with the help of God, set forth the little which I have learnt, though it will seem but a poor thing to many. But this does not trouble me, for I know well that it is easier to find fault with a thing than to make something better."



*St. Jerome. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.*

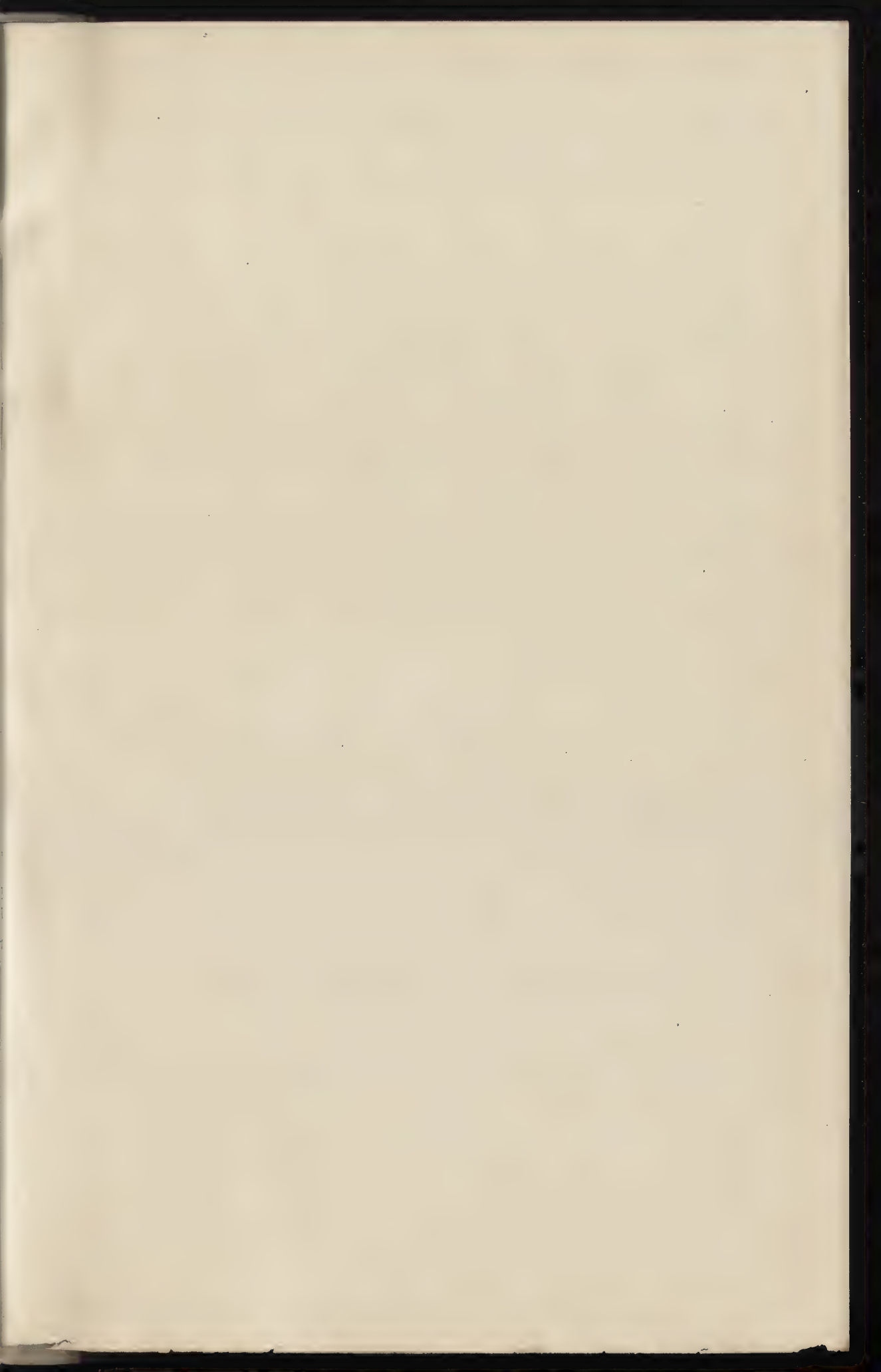


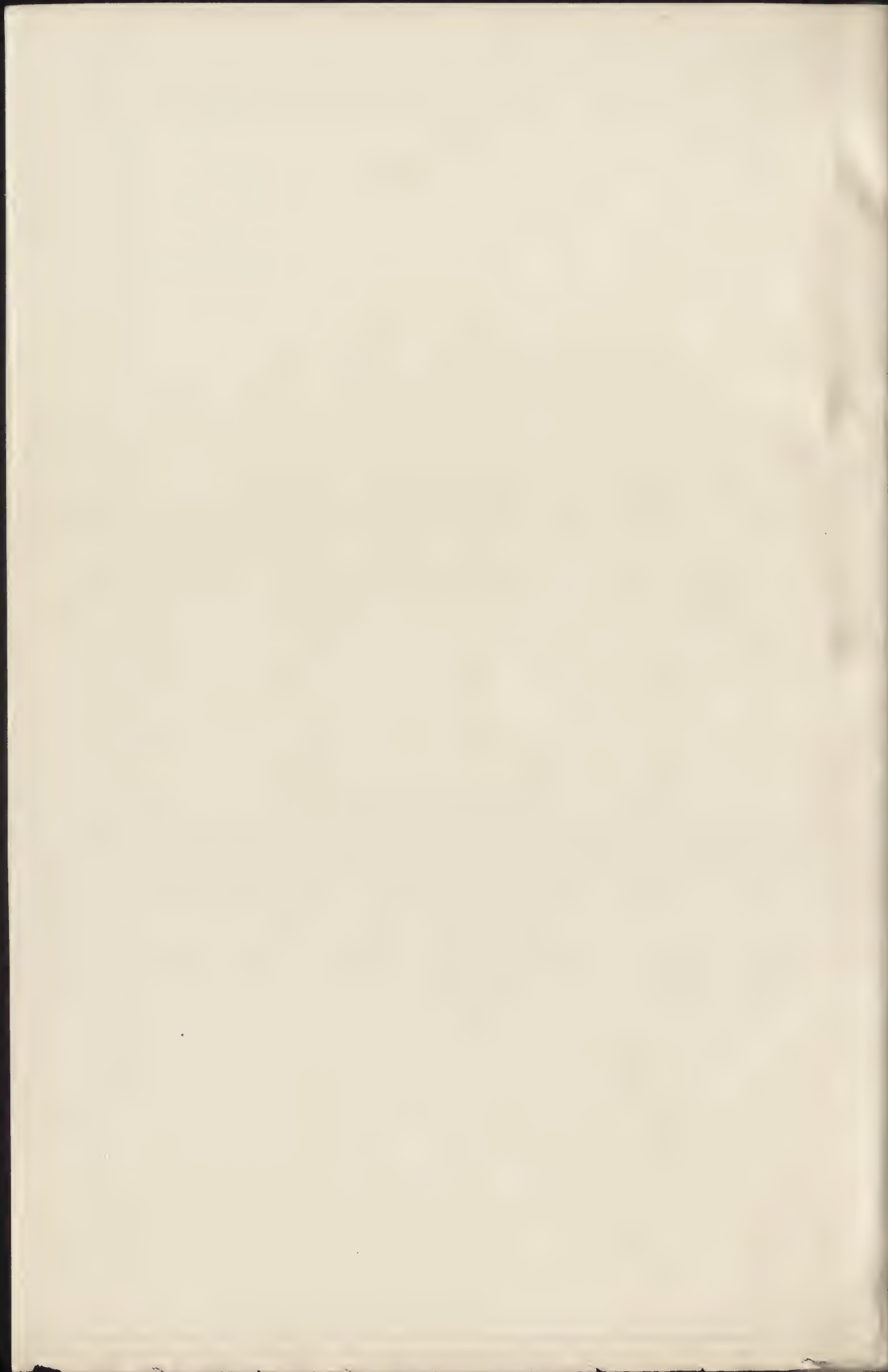
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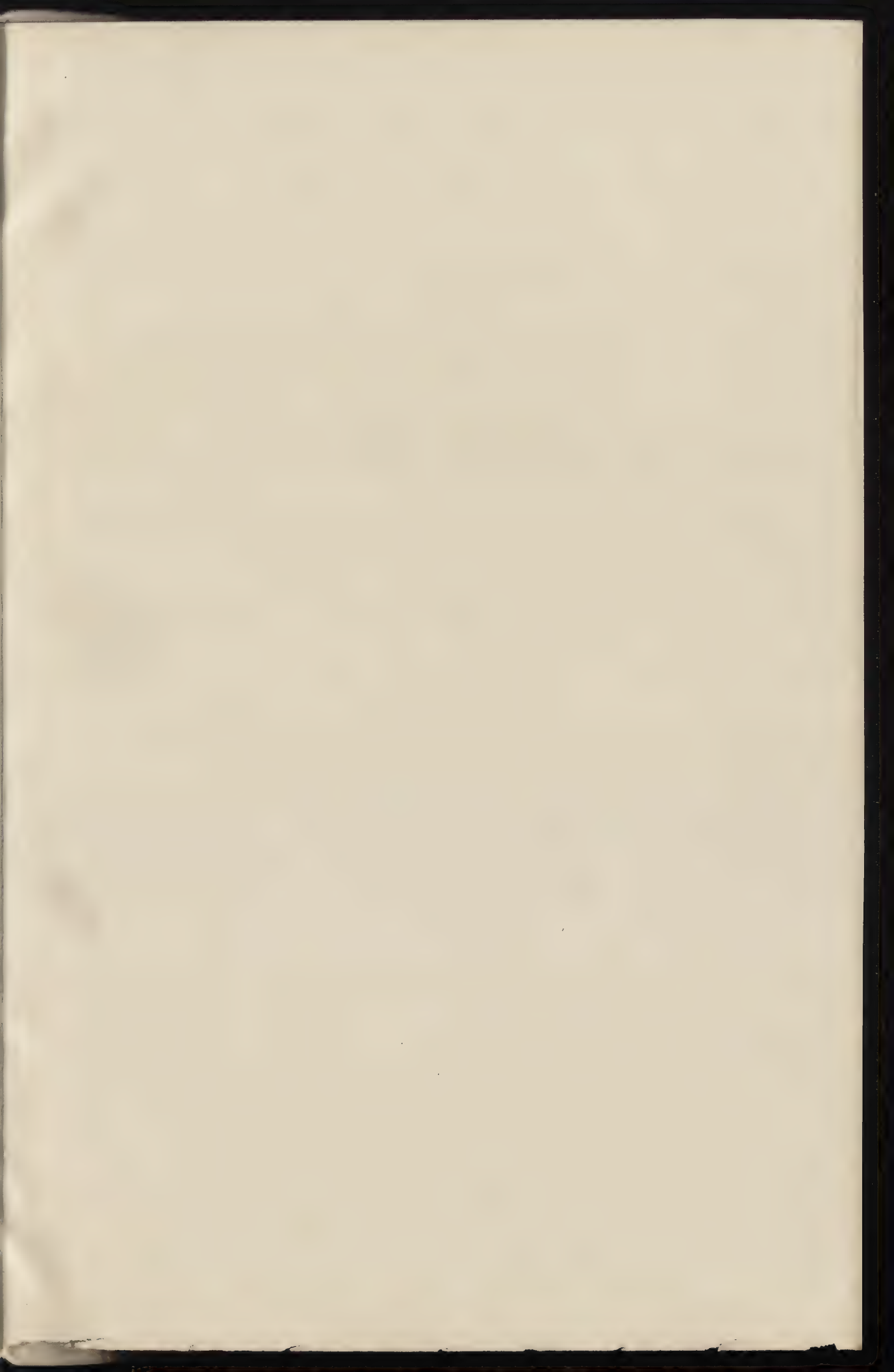
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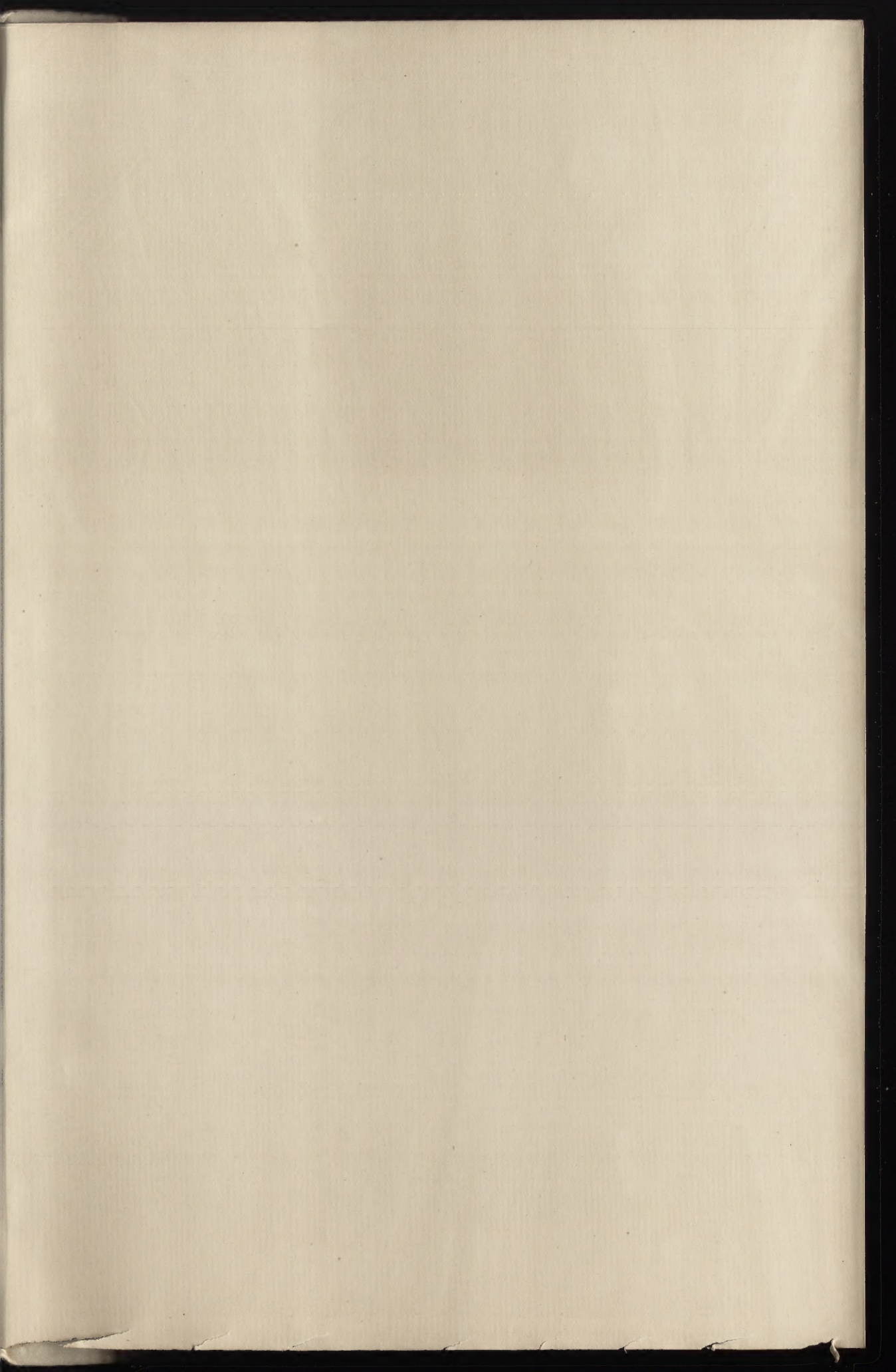






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